

**THE MILITARY VERSUS THE PRESS:  
JAPANESE MILITARY CONTROLS OVER ONE U.S. JOURNALIST, JOHN  
B. POWELL, IN SHANGHAI DURING THE SINO-JAPANESE WAR,  
1937-1941**

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In Partial Fulfillment  
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Master of Arts

By YOU LI

Dr. Betty Houchin Winfield, Thesis Supervisor

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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the

Military versus Press: JAPANESE MILITARY CONTROLS OVER ONE U.S. JOURNALIST, JOHN B. POWELL, IN SHANGHAI DURING THE SINO-JAPANESE WAR, 1937-1941

presented by You Li, a candidate for the degree of Master of Journalism and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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**ABSTRACT**

Military controls over journalism and journalists during wartime have long existed in various forms. As multinational relations become more complex during a war, the military controls can extend beyond the journalists of warring countries to journalists of neutral countries. This thesis uses a case study to answer why and how the military controlled independent journalists and publications of the neutral states. Specifically, this thesis investigates why and how the Japanese military controlled one independent U.S. journalist John B. Powell and his journal *The China Weekly Review* in Shanghai during the second Sino-Japanese War, August 1937 through December 1941. Powell's case exemplified the dilemma facing independent journalists of neutral states in a foreign war: they report a foreign battlefield with no institutional protection or logistical support from their home countries, while encountering severe military controls from the warring countries. From this research emerges a new pattern, in which nation A's military controls nation B's journalists in a war with nation C (ABC pattern).

## INTRODUCTION

Many years ago, British scholar Philip Knightley used Senator Hiram Johnson's quote (1917) for the title of a book: "The first casualty when war comes is truth."<sup>1</sup> Journalists who attempt to convey the truth are also the victims when war intrudes. This was especially true when Japan attacked Shanghai's "native city" on August 7, 1937.<sup>2</sup> Although the European and the American governments showed concern about the incident, none intended to defend China.<sup>3</sup> The American residents in Shanghai, however, were quite outspoken.<sup>4</sup> John B. Powell, the managing editor of an English-language journal in Shanghai, *The China Weekly Review*, strongly and courageously condemned the Japanese assault. Powell later wrote that he planned to "bring home what I saw in the East ... to warn our people and government of Japan's aggression"<sup>5</sup> and "to fight with all our might for victory."<sup>6</sup> Powell's journalistic

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<sup>1</sup> Senator Hiram Johnson, preface to *The First Casualty*, by Phillip Knightley (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), i.

<sup>2</sup> Hollington K. Tong, *China and the World Press* (N/A, 1948), 23.

<sup>3</sup> Youli Sun, *China and the Origins of the Pacific War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 92.

<sup>4</sup> Tong, *China and the World Press*, 26.

<sup>5</sup> John Benjamin Powell, *My 25 Years in China*, chapter 30, in C3662 Papers, 1910-1952 (Henceforth, JBPP), F 122. Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri, Columbia (Henceforth, WHMC).

<sup>6</sup> Powell, quoted in one essay by the Victory Service League, 1942-1945. F 1, JBPP, 1.  
Powell credited the quotations at the end of the essay by saying: "the above statement of my recommendations to the American people is correct and is hereby authorized for quotation by the

ambitions conflicted with the Japanese military interference. The Japanese pressured the Chinese Nationalist Party to suppress liberal newspapers and anti-Japanese speech, including that of the foreign nationals.<sup>7</sup> In December 1941, when the Japanese overran Shanghai, they captured Powell, along with other foreign journalists. With little support from the U.S. or the Chinese government, Powell was imprisoned in the Japanese camp for six months. During that time, Powell lost 85 pounds, one foot, and much of the other from gangrene.<sup>8</sup> He never fully recovered after returning to the U.S. in 1942, and died five years later.

Powell was just one among many other foreign journalists, who before 1937 went to China for personal adventures and started their own journalistic enterprises, but later found themselves trapped in chaotic international conflicts when East Asia went to war. Those foreign journalists found themselves alone on the other side of the world: they covered multinational conflicts in China with no logistical support, physical protection, or institutional assistance. Moreover, Powell, as well as the others, faced a more complicated publishing environment in Asia, where the Chinese, Japanese, Americans, and Europeans competed for power.

This thesis explores the Japanese military suppression of the American-owned English periodicals in China through a case study on the reporting experience of one such journalist, John B. Powell, in Shanghai during the second

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Victory Service League.”

<sup>7</sup> William W. Y. Leong, “The Effects of Censorship and Japanese Pressure on the Chinese and Foreign Press in China” (M.A. thesis, University of Missouri-Columbia, 1938), 129.

<sup>8</sup> Tong, *China and the World Press*, 24.

Sino-Japanese Conflict, from August 7, 1937, when Japan attacked Shanghai, to December 7, 1941, when Japan fully controlled Shanghai and sealed all foreign publications that were not subsidized by the Japanese. On December 7, 1941, after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and Philippines, the U.S. immediately declared war on Japan. This period can be characterized as a queasy moment of political disorders and economic competitions, when a regional crisis between China and Japan escalated into a full-scale war across the Asian-Pacific area. The need to win dominated each country's national agenda, regardless of whether its government was authoritarian, militaristic, or democratic. Under such circumstances, the Japanese military in China manipulated foreign journalists and their publications.

This research asks primarily why and how the Japanese military controlled John B. Powell and the *Review* in Shanghai during the Sino-Japanese War from 1937 to 1941. The analysis highlights three aspects: John B. Powell, who represented the American independent journalists in China, the Japanese military controls over the press, and the wartime environment in Shanghai.

“Independent American journalists in China” refers to those who worked for the American-owned English periodicals that were published and circulated primarily in China. Most studies have not defined “the foreign press and journalists in China” clearly. Categorized by the ownerships and operating locations, the foreign press in China included: the Chinese-owned English-language publications, such as the *China Press*;<sup>9</sup> the foreign-owned Chinese-language publications, such as the *Chinese Global*

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<sup>9</sup> Note: According to “The China Press” in the *English Language Learning*, July, 2003, Thomas Millard established the China Press in 1911. In 1918, a British Jewish businessman Edward Ezra

*Magazine*;<sup>10</sup> the foreign-owned news bureaus in China, such as *Reuters* and *The Associated Press*; the foreign-owned publications with overseas correspondents in China, such as *The New York Times* and the *Manchester Guardian*; and the foreign-owned English-language publications headquartered and circulated mainly in China, such as the *Review*. Among those categories, the foreign-owned English-language publications that originated in China even though they claimed to be independent from any interest group, they received the most severe controls from both the Chinese and Japanese militaries.

The second aspect of the thesis considers the Japanese military controls over the press from 1937 to 1941, the time of the Sino-Japanese War. The study will seek the Japanese military interference with the newspapers' normal operations. Such interference included, but was not limited to, briberies, verbal threats, imprisonments, and assassinations of the editorial staff; and financial support, the censorship actions, and seal of the press.

The third aspect analyzes the wartime environment in China during the Sino-Japanese War. China experienced a political transition in the 1930s, full of external and internal crises. Externally, following World War I, China remained a semi-colony occupied by several foreign powers, the British, France, U.S. for instance, for almost two decades. Meanwhile, China faced the deadly threat of Japanese

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bought the paper. After Ezra died, Mrs. Ezra took over the paper. Sometime around 1930 or 1931, Hollington K. Tong, a Chinese publisher and editor bought the paper on the behalf of a Chinese syndicate. There were four Americans and four Chinese on the editorial board. Even though it is a Chinese-owned paper, Tong wanted to publish a live newspaper adhering strictly to American journalistic principles. [http://www.beiwaionline.com/englishstudy/2003/Jul/corridor\\_01.htm](http://www.beiwaionline.com/englishstudy/2003/Jul/corridor_01.htm)

<sup>10</sup> Tao Zhang, "Protestant Missionary Publishing and the Birth of Chinese Elite Journalism," *Journalism Studies* 8, 6 (December 2007): 881.

invasion after 1937. Internally, at the same time, the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese Nationalist Party battled for leadership of the country.<sup>11</sup> Press freedom, as known in the Western countries for openness, access and critical journalism, never truly existed in wartime China.

This study will rely on primary sources to examine John B. Powell of the *Review* among other American journalists and independent press in China. The materials consist of three parts: John B. Powell's collection at the Western Historical Manuscript Collection of the University of Missouri: Powell's papers, such as manuscripts, personal correspondences, memoirs, and autobiography, will reveal his experiences as a reporter and U.S. resident in Shanghai, and his attitude toward the Sino-Japanese War from 1937 to 1941. The second category of primary sources is copies of the *Review* from 1937 to 1941 at the library depository of the University of Missouri. This study will pay special attention to editorials on certain incidents, such as the so-called "Panay Incident" near Nanking, American interests in China, and the Japanese military suppressions over the press. This study intends to analyze Powell's editorial attitudes toward the Japanese military, the Chinese Nationalist Party, and the United States. His critical editorial policy potentially caused the Japanese military to harass him. The third category is the papers of Powell's peers in Shanghai, such as: a) Carl Crow who went to Shanghai in 1911 and became very involved in journalism and politics in China in his 25-year residence there.<sup>12</sup> The Western Historical

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<sup>11</sup> Chronology in Lois Wheeler Snow, *Edgar Snow's China* (New York: Random House, 1981), xviii.

<sup>12</sup> Note: Carl Crow worked as a journalist and founding editor of the *Shanghai Evening Post*. He also opened the first Western advertising agency in Shanghai. Occasionally, Crow did stints as a

Manuscript Collection at the University of Missouri stores Crow's collections, including his correspondences, speeches, manuscripts of articles and books, diaries of a trip to the Burma Road, as well as diaries of a Japanese soldier, and notes on China and Japan.<sup>13</sup> b) Another Powell's peer was Maurice E. Votaw, who taught journalism and worked for both Chinese and American government agencies in 1930s and 1940s.<sup>14</sup> The Western Historical Manuscript Collection maintains Votaw's research manuscripts on Japanese military propaganda strategy during World War II.<sup>15</sup> Even though not all these journalists fit in the category of "independent American journalists in China," their stories will offer historical context to Powell's experiences. This study will not be a story of just one man and his publication, but rather his story in the midst of the others who shared similar experiences.

Secondary sources will mainly explain the other two aspects: "the Japanese military controls over the press" and "wartime China." To be specific, this paper will refer to previous research in three parts: 1) studies on the relations between military and the press in wartime; 2) news articles and other scholarly studies about Powell and the *Review*; 3) studies on the second Sino-Japanese War, international relations between Japan, the U.S., and China. These secondary sources should provide

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hostage negotiator, emergency police sergeant, go-between for the Americans government, and propagandist.

<sup>13</sup> Carl Crow, C0041 Papers, 1913-1945, Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri, Columbia.

<sup>14</sup> Note: Votaw taught journalism at St. John's University in Shanghai from 1922 to 1939, and 1947 to 1949; served as an adviser to the Nationalist Chinese ministry of information from 1939 to 1949; and served as the secretary of the American Advisory Committee and American Red Cross from 1940 to 1948.

<sup>15</sup> Maurice E. Votaw, C3672 Papers, 1909-1978, Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri, Columbia.

a solid background of Shanghai and overall, China, in the 1930s, and especially addressed the reporting and publishing environment of Powell and the *Review*.

Historians of different countries have recorded various versions of the second Sino-Japanese War. The following sources should reveal the Chinese, Japanese, and American viewpoints of the war. The Japanese version of the war in English language: *Japanese Monographs*, which contains a series of operational histories written by the former officers of the Japanese army and navy under the direction of General Headquarters of the U.S. Far East Command. A portion of the material is now available online.<sup>16</sup> The Chinese Nationalist version of the war: a 500-page *History of the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945* (1971) is an incredibly detailed account of political and military affairs from the Nationalist perspective;<sup>17</sup> *Nationalist China during the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945* (1977) compounds several Chinese and American scholarly essays on the origins of the war, education, economics, and politics in wartime China.<sup>18</sup> The American version of the war: *The Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1941: from Marco Polo Bridge to Pearl Harbor* (1974) is a detailed war record prepared by military historians and scholars in the U.S.; *American, Chinese, and Japanese Perspectives on Wartime Asia: 1931-1949* (1990) reviewed war efforts of these three countries by leading scholars in the field.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Bibliography of Steve Philips, *Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945, the Military Struggle*. (Towson University, April 2004), 35.

<sup>17</sup> Long-hsuen Hsu and Ming-kai Chang, trans. by Ha-hsiung Wen, *History of the Sino-Japanese War: 1937-1945* (Taipei, Taiwan: ChungWu Publishing Co., 1971).

<sup>18</sup> Paul K. T. Sih, *Nationalist China during the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945* (Hicksville, New York: Exposition Press, 1977).

<sup>19</sup> Akira Iriye and Warren Cohen, ed. *American, Chinese, and Japanese Perspectives on Wartime*

In addition, a handful of studies on international relations during the Sino-Japanese War and World War II should explain the macro reasons of the Japanese military conflict with the American press in China. Such literature includes *American Far Eastern Policy and the Sino-Japanese War, the United States and the Far Eastern Crisis of 1933-1938* (1938), and *American's Share in Japan's War Guilt* (1938), which revealed American interests, policies, and standpoints in the war.<sup>20</sup>

This study is original. It highlights a conflict between the military and the independent journalists and publications of neutral states in wartime. The Japanese invading military controlled the American journalists and press in various wars even though the U.S. did not join the Sino-Japanese War. Moreover, the Japanese military controls of American journalists and press happened in neither Japan nor the U.S., but in the foreign battlefield of China. The study argues that the foreign press represented the national interests and strength of power of their mother countries in a semi-colonial China. Therefore, the American press and journalists were pressured not only by the Japanese, but also by the wartime environment in China where multiple powers tangled and competed with each other. In addition, this study aims to understand a group of overlooked American journalists and their coverage of a foreign war. American journalists and their reporting in China in the 1930s did not win much sympathy in the U.S., because China was not yet the main interest of the U.S. until

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*Asia, 1931-1949*. (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1990).

<sup>20</sup> Miriam S. Farley Ed., *American Far Eastern Policy and the Sino-Japanese War* (San Francisco, New York and Honolulu: American Council •Institute of Pacific Relations, 1938); See too Dorothy Borg, *the United States and the Far Eastern Crisis of 1933-1938* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1964); See too *American's Share in Japan's War Guilt* (New York: American Committee for Non-Participation in Japanese Aggression, 1938).

1939, according to MacKinnon and Friesen.<sup>21</sup>

Chapter One relates the foreign press and journalists with the social environment in China in the 1930s. It reviews the history of the foreign press and journalists in China: their origins and patterns, social influences, and dilemma and development. In addition, it describe the conflict between the military and wartime press by summarizing major military control methods of the wartime press from other scholarly works. Lastly, it focuses on the foreign press and journalists in the Sino-Japanese War, especially those that published in Shanghai. The first chapter frames the social environment: what Powell and his peers entered into, the Chinese semi-colonial conditions, the interrelations among Japan, China and the U.S. during the second Sino-Japanese War, and how those relations mattered as the war proceeded.

Chapter Two introduces John B. Powell and the *Review*. It will explain what motivated Powell as well as other American journalists to live and report in China in the 1930s. This chapter argues that Powell exemplified the independent American journalists in China during the Sino-Japanese War. The second purpose of this chapter is to investigate the background of the *Review*: its history, editorial policy, readership, and journalistic values in China in the 1930s.

Chapter Three presents a macro-picture of a country under war. It will analyze the Japanese military controls methods in general from the following perspectives, such as law, censorship actions, military violent enforcement, etc.

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<sup>21</sup> MacKinnon and Friesen, *China Reporting: An Oral History of American Journalism in the 1930s and 1940s*, 4.

Chapter Four focuses on Powell and the *Review* as representatives of the foreign independent journalists and publications in China. This chapter recounts the control chronologically by reviewing Powell's reporting and editorial opinions on specific events; what he said about the government, military, and press controls; and how the Japanese military reacted.

Chapter Five answers research questions about how and why the Japanese military controlled independent American journalists and press during the Sino-Japanese War. It compares the findings of this single case to the overall military controls then and previously, summarizes the similarities and differences, and points out how this research may complement previous studies on military and wartime press.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

# **FOREIGN PUBLICATIONS IN SEMI-COLONIAL CHINA: WHEN THE FREE PRESS OPERATED IN A MILITARY ZONE**

### **The Foreign Press in Semi-Colonial China**

Members of the assorted foreign press in China the early twentieth century had much in common: they entered China through missionary connections; many operated in the eastern coastal areas, where China's most prosperous cities and social elites were located; they unconsciously served multiple social functions, and greatly influenced China's modernization. However, the semi-colonial environment restrained and eventually snuffed out the foreign press. Years of Chinese civil battles and Western competitions for power posed an unprecedented dilemma for the foreign press. The situation turned worse when the Japanese invaded China.

### **The Foreign Press: Origins & Patterns**

The foreign publications in China originated and developed mostly through the efforts of early Western missionaries, whose overall mission was to promote Christianity.<sup>22</sup> In 1833, Karl Friedrich August Gutzlaff, a Prussian missionary, established and edited the first foreign periodical in Canton, the *East West Monthly*

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<sup>22</sup> Leong, "The Effects of Censorship and Japanese Pressure on the Chinese and Foreign Press in China," 88-89; See too Rosewell S. Britton. *The Chinese Periodical Press, 1800-1912* (Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh, 1933), 131.

*Magazine*.<sup>23</sup> For the next 50 years, Western missionaries established about 170 newspapers and periodicals, accounting for 95 percent of press in China then.<sup>24</sup>

Among the Western missionaries, Americans had been involved in Chinese journalism and the publishing industry since the early nineteenth century. W.W. Wood established the *Canton Register* in 1827, the earliest American-owned Chinese-language newspaper. American missionaries edited the *Chinese Repository* in 1832, and then the *Chinese Recorder*, until the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941.<sup>25</sup> Most of the publications originated first in the eastern coastal cities, such as Canton, Ningbo, Xiamen, and Hong Kong, and then Shanghai, which later became the publishing center of all foreign publications in China.<sup>26</sup>

The commercial press was the second generation of the early Western press in China.<sup>27</sup> After the Open Door Policy<sup>28</sup> began in the late nineteenth century, more and more Westerners swarmed into China's market, especially into the treaty ports on the east coast. They established the foreign-language press to facilitate trade and

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<sup>23</sup> Fang Hanqi, *Zhongguo Xinwen Shiye Tongshi [A History of Chinese Journalism]* (Beijing: Renmin University Press, 1997), 269.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>25</sup> Powell, "Publishing in Shanghai," in *Journalism in Wartime* Eds. Frank Luther Mott (Washington D.C.: American Council on Public Affairs, 1943), 76.

<sup>26</sup> Zhang, "Protestant Missionary Publishing and the Birth of Chinese Elite Journalism," 881.

<sup>27</sup> Britton, *The Chinese Periodical Press 1800-1912*, 131.

<sup>28</sup> Note: It was one of the two U.S. policies toward China in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Washington insisted that Americans should enjoy the same privileges in China as the citizens of other treaty powers, including the right to reside and trade in their colonies and concessions. The U.S. asked the major powers, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, Japan, and Russia to declare formally that they would uphold Chinese territorial and administrative integrity and would not interfere with the free use of the treaty ports within their domains in China.

communication in the foreign communities and to help those foreigners adjust to Chinese society, while spiritually connecting them with the home cultures.<sup>29</sup>

Meanwhile, some most influential American-owned missionary newspapers, the *Wanguo Gongbao* (known as the *Chinese Global Magazine* or *A Review of the Times* in English) for instance, also transformed from religious organs to broader interest journals. By 1920, 44 foreign-language newspapers existed in China, mostly in Shanghai and Beijing. Western wire news agencies, such as the Reuters (British), The Associated Press (American), Wolf (Germany), and Hawass (French), all established news bureaus in China. Among those Western powers, the British dominated the media industry as they owned many of the most influential Chinese and English publications.<sup>30</sup>

China reporting in the early twentieth century was called romantic and diversified.<sup>31</sup> Most American reporters and managers of the commercial press arrived at the land accidentally as wire-service reporters, freelancers, or student travelers before 1937.<sup>32</sup> Many of those American journalists, including John B. Powell, belonged to what was called the “Missouri Mafia,” referring to graduates of the

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Yong Volz and Chin-Chuan Lee (upcoming), “American Pragmatism and Chinese Modernization: importing the Missouri Model of Journalism Education to Modern China,” *Media, Culture & Society*, 5.

<sup>31</sup> Stephen MacKinnon, “The ‘Romantic’ Generation,” *Media Studies Journal*, Winter (1999): 11.

<sup>32</sup> Stephen MacKinnon and Oris Friesen, *China Reporting: An Oral History of American Journalism in the 1930s and 1940* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford: University of California Press, 1987), 3.

Missouri School of Journalism.<sup>33</sup> Thomas Franklin Millard, a Missouri graduate, founded the well-known English-language newspaper, the *China Press* in 1911.<sup>34</sup> Carl Crow, another alumnus of the school, was associated with Millard in starting the *Press*, and connected with other journalistic enterprises in China. He was the editor of the *North China Daily News*, the founder of the first Western advertising agency in Shanghai, and the founding editor of the *Shanghai Evening Post*.<sup>35</sup> Also associated with Millard was John B. Powell, who assisted Millard in founding the *Millard's Review of the Far East* in 1917. Later, Powell took over the paper and changed the name to the *Review* in June 1923.<sup>36</sup> Other American correspondents were refugees of the Great Depression. The promise of adventures in a mysterious country and rumors of job opportunities attracted them to this remote land.<sup>37</sup>

Political passions and ideological commitments of those journalists diversified the types of reporting about China.<sup>38</sup> Some reporters arrived with political positions while the others, such as Edgar Snow, the author of *Red Star over China* (1938), arrived in China with no particular political interests. Some sided with the Chinese or Japanese political parties as freelancers or news staff for the

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Leong, "The Effects of Censorship and Japanese Pressure on the Chinese and Foreign Press in China," 90.

<sup>35</sup> Carl Crow, C0041, Papers, 1913-1945, Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri, Columbia, preface.

<sup>36</sup> Wei-san Lau, "The University of Missouri and Journalism in China" (M.A. thesis, University of Missouri-Columbia, 1949), 76.

<sup>37</sup> MacKinnon, "The 'Romantic' Generation," 11.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 12.

Chinese-owned or Japanese-owned English-language publications, while the others, such as Powell, were proud of being “objective” and independent.<sup>39</sup>

Three types of studies have mentioned Powell’s journalistic experiences in China. Most studies on Missouri’s connection with the Chinese journalism have mentioned Powell as a member of the “Missouri Mafia”. For example, in Lau’s studies on Missouri’s relations with China in the early twentieth century, he mentioned Powell’s relations with other Missouri graduates in China.<sup>40</sup> A few studies detailed Powell’s adventures in Asia. For example, another Missouri master’s thesis examined Powell’s relations with China from 1917 to 1942: his reactions to significant political events, such as the first and second Nationalist-Communist Cooperations, and his personal attitudes about the Chinese political leaders, such as Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek; his hostage experience in the 1920s and prison experience with Japanese military in 1941.<sup>41</sup> Though this study detailed Powell’s twenty-five years in China, it primarily reorganized and typed out Powell’s manuscripts and personal memos. Other scholarly works portrayed John B. Powell not as a journalist, but rather as the father of John William Powell, who ran *The Review* until 1953 after John B. Powell returned to the U.S. in 1942.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 13-14.

<sup>40</sup> Lau, “The University of Missouri and Journalism in China,” 69-76; See too MacKinnon, “The ‘Romantic’ Generation,” 11-12; See too Volz and Lee, “American Pragmatism and Chinese Modernization: Importing the Missouri Model of Journalism Education to Modern China,” 5; See too MacKinnon and Friesen, *China Reporting: An Oral History of American Journalism in the 1930s and 1940s*, 3-4.

<sup>41</sup> Binggang Chen, “John Benjamin Powell and China,” (M.A. thesis, University of Missouri-Columbia, 1984), 24-77.

Generally speaking, these studies discussed Powell's reporting experiences in China only to support other research purposes. None of those three previous studies systematically examined the Japanese military conflicts with Powell's journalistic performance during wartime. Neither did those studies portray Powell as a representative of a group of American journalists who covered the war, not for the media institutions at home, but rather for the English-language publications in China. Powell's magazine, the *Review*, which was claimed to be the oldest and most influential American-owned English publication in Shanghai during that period, is also worthy of examination.<sup>43</sup>

### **Social Functions & Influence**

The foreign missionary press of the nineteenth century had major social functions. The primary objective was to promote Christianity. The missionary press published general information on religions and morality, missionary works, and important missionary activities. Too, the foreign missionary press needed to bond with an exclusively Chinese public. They wrote about public events of the day, and discussed some Chinese issues in order to keep the papers fresh and exciting to the Chinese readers. In addition, they introduced knowledge of the West. Some liberal-minded missionaries interpreted this function as to awaken the Chinese

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<sup>42</sup> Fuyuan Shen, "McCarthy Era Ordeal: John William Powell and the China Weekly Review," *Mass Communication Review*, Volume 24, Numbers 3 and 4 (1997): 102-116; See too Neil L.O'Brien, *An American Editor in Early Revolutionary China: John William Powell and the China Weekly / Monthly Review* (New York & London: Routledge, 2003).

<sup>43</sup> MacKinnon, "The 'Romantic' Generation," 13-14.

people.<sup>44</sup> As China had isolated herself from the world for over a century by then, the Chinese elites hungered for modern knowledge and technologies to advance China's modernization. The missionary press enlightened the Chinese intellectuals with knowledge about natural science, Western philosophies, and political structures. Those Western ideas and the Chinese defeat in the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) stimulated the Chinese elites to start radical social and political reforms. This was the beginning of a number of Chinese modern newspapers, which introduced revolutionary ideas to win public support. Chinese journalism embraced its golden period starting from 1895 to 1911.<sup>45</sup> For this reason, scholars have considered the missionary press as the forerunner of the modern Chinese press.<sup>46</sup> Besides journalism industry, the foreign press played an important part to speed up Chinese modernization in many other fields, such as education and feminism.<sup>47</sup>

Compared to the missionary press, the foreign-owned commercial press of the early twentieth century contained a twofold function besides introducing Western knowledge. As a byproduct of the booming foreign business in China's treaty ports, commercial press provided daily news to facilitate the international trade and daily communication within the foreign settlements in China. The news contents consisted chiefly of political activities in China and events of the world at large. Owned by

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<sup>44</sup> Yutang Lin, "The Beginning of Modern Press: 1815-1895," in *A History of the Press and Public Opinion in China* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1936), 78-82.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>47</sup> Yong Z. Volz, "Going Public through Writing: Women Journalists and Gendered Journalistic Space in China, 1890s-1920s," *Media, Culture & Society*, 29(2007): 474-478.

different countries, the foreign press tended to emphasize more news related to their home countries than those of the other countries in the world.<sup>48</sup> Their comments on important public events unconsciously reflected the viewpoints of their home countries.<sup>49</sup> The commercial press represented the foreign interests in China. If a particular country owned more influential publications in China, the country had more active voices in Asia. Also, the commercial press created and served a unique public sphere. Their readers included both foreigners and the Chinese. Two groups made up the foreign readers: one group were the foreign residents in China, including missionaries, officials of the foreign governments, executive heads of the Western banks and of the foreign branches of international corporations. The second group was the foreign audience in other countries whose publications often reprinted news stories from the foreign press in China. The Chinese intellectuals who learned English as a second language made up the Chinese readership.<sup>50</sup> Most of those people had some Western background from either attending the Western missionary schools in China or studying overseas and then returning to China as journalists, social reformers, educators, and interpreters.<sup>51</sup> They believed in Western civilization and wanted to modernize China with what they learned from the West.

Thus, the foreign press of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century

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<sup>48</sup> Leong, "The Effects of Censorship and Japanese Pressure on the Chinese and Foreign Press in China," 91-92.

<sup>49</sup> Thomas Ming-Heng Chao. *The Foreign Press in China*, (Shanghai: China Institute of Pacific Relations, 1931), 57.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 91.

<sup>51</sup> Volz, "Going Public through Writing: Women Journalists and Gendered Journalistic Space in China, 1890s-1920s," 474-478.

carried on many missions. On one side, they facilitated public communication, expressed public opinions, and simulated China's modernization. On the other side, they spoke for the interests of the Western colonists in China. Due to its twofold roles, the foreign press experienced a dilemma as they developed in a semi-colonial environment.

### **Dilemma versus Development**

Semi-colonialism was a double-edge sword for the foreign press in China. The foreign press entered China along with the Western colonists who requested that China open its market. Chinese intellectuals promoted and applied the Western journalism and political philosophy to modernize the country, which incidentally spurred the development of the foreign press in China. On the other hand, the competition among the Western colonists, and the deadly threats from the Chinese authoritative government and the Japanese militarism harmed the press, and eventually drove most of them out of business during wartime. Under such a social environment, the foreign press struggled through dilemmas and obstacles.

China's semi-colonialism was characterized by these three features: partial, multiple, and informal.<sup>52</sup> The colonies crowded the eastern coastal cities, while the vast inner lands were left to the leadership of the Chinese Nationalist government and local warlords. Consequently, more foreign publications developed in the eastern metropolitan cities, Shanghai and Beijing, in particular. For example, by the 1920s,

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<sup>52</sup> Shu-mei Shih, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 5-8.

Shanghai, China's largest and most Westernized city, had already become the industrial center in East Asia with one of the world's largest ports. Their population, approximately three million, had some 75,000 to 80,000 foreigners of almost every nationality and race.<sup>53</sup> By the 1930s, Shanghai had the highest number of English-language publications, and was known as the publishing center of the foreign correspondents.<sup>54</sup> Between 1937 and 1941, Shanghai had four English-language dailies: the *North-China Daily News*, the oldest British-owned paper; the *Shanghai Times*, owned by the British and subsidized by the Japanese; the *China Press*, owned by Chinese-American interests; and the *Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury*, American-owned. Among the periodicals was the *Review*, the oldest American-owned and most influential periodical in the Asia, according to Powell.<sup>55</sup>

In addition, the competition among the Western colonists paved the way for a flourishing foreign press in China. Unlike those colonies ruled by a single colonist, China was occupied by the multiple Western powers of the French, British, American, and Germany, as well as the Japanese who competed for territories and wealth. The competition among the Western colonists created a free market environment for the foreign press. And the dominance of the Western powers in foreign concessions decreased the Chinese interference with the foreign press before wartime. For example, Shanghai consisted of the political entities of the Chinese city or the "Native

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<sup>53</sup> Powell, *My 25 Years in China*, F 89, JBPP, 1.

<sup>54</sup> Robert W. Desmond, *Ties of War: World News Reporting 1940-45* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1984), 181.

<sup>55</sup> Powell, "Publishing in Shanghai," 74.

City,” the French Concession, and the International Settlement.<sup>56</sup> It was not the Chinese, but rather a Municipal Council dominated by the British, American, and even Japanese that governed the International Settlement.<sup>57</sup> Those foreign concessions enjoyed a high degree of extra-territoriality: the Chinese military was not allowed in the concessions; Chinese courts had no jurisdiction over the foreign nationals there.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, Shanghai remained a relatively safe “haven” for the foreign nationals before the Japanese fully occupied the city on the early morning of December 7, 1941.

Lastly, the colonialism was informal in China. The colonists built their concessions primarily upon the economic connections rather than upon the military occupations. Therefore, the foreign press paid attention to economic competitions among the Western powers, Chinese public opinions, and the relations with the Chinese elites.<sup>59</sup> The foreign press in China did not develop through a structured media system, but rather relied on individual journalists’ wisdom and courage.

Though the semi-colonialism encouraged the birth of the foreign press initially, it restrained their development in the long term. The complicated international relations often harmed the foreign press when the colonists fought for more territories and wealth. The foreign press continued to speak for their home countries’ interests. The competitions among foreign colonists in China sometimes

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<sup>56</sup> Powell, *My 25 Years in China*, F 69, JBPP, 3.

<sup>57</sup> Tong, *China and the World Press*, 23.

<sup>58</sup> Rudolf Wagner, “The Role of the Foreign Community in the Chinese Public Sphere,” *China Quarterly*, 142 (1995): 431.

<sup>59</sup> Volz and Lee, “American Pragmatism and Chinese Modernization: Importing the Missouri Model of Journalism Education to Modern China,” 3; See too, Wagner, “The Role of the Foreign Community in the Chinese Public Sphere,” 432.

reflected the competitions among the foreign press of different countries. Therefore, understanding the triangular relations among the U.S., China, and Japan is very important in order to perceive the motives of the Japanese military controls over the U.S. press in China.

The American interests in China centered on philanthropy and business enterprises.<sup>60</sup> The American missionaries, teachers, and technicians in China established and maintained close relations with the Chinese people. Powell recounted that before the Japanese occupation, Shanghai showed more evidence of American influence than any other Asian port city aside from Manila in the Philippines.<sup>61</sup> American schools, churches and factories were organized, and American companies invested in many industries such as electricity, telecommunications, and manufacturing.<sup>62</sup> In addition, the United States emphasized the principles of an Open Door policy and the integrity of China. Following the lead of Great Britain, the U.S. insisted on a free and open access to China's market. An integral Chinese territory was good for U.S. commercial and financial interests.<sup>63</sup>

In contrast, the American attitude toward Japan was one of vague distrust, tinged with uneasiness. Fundamentally, the U.S. shared a different political philosophy from Japan; one believed in democracy, and the other threatened the world

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<sup>60</sup> Farley, *American Far Eastern Policy and the Sino-Japanese War*, 10.

<sup>61</sup> Powell, *My 25 Years in China*, 19.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, F 125 JBPP, 9.

<sup>63</sup> Ta Jen Liu, "First Contact with the West: 1784-1910" in *U.S.-China Relations, 1784-1992* (Lanham • New York • London: University Press of America, Inc., 1997), 16-18.

peace with militarism. Especially when a Japanese dictatorship gradually rose in Asia, more Americans began to argue that an attack on democracy anywhere in the world was a threat to American ideals and security.<sup>64</sup> In Asia, Japan competed with the U.S. for dominations of the Pacific before 1900. They tangled over the inheritance of the German-held Pacific islands after World War I, as Japan prepared war plans and built up navies.<sup>65</sup> The tensions rose to an all-time-high starting from 1920s, when the Japanese attempted to create exclusive influence in Northeast China which violated the spirit of the American Open Door Policy.<sup>66</sup> Since 1937, when the Japanese military moved toward central and south China, the tensions between the U.S. and Japan were tightened even more. For example, compared to American enthusiasm of the industrial growth in Shanghai, Japan, on the contrary, hoped to stifle the city's growth. The Japanese saw Shanghai as detrimental to the future of Osaka, the largest Japanese port and manufacturing center.<sup>67</sup> As the American and European powers tolerated Japan's early aggression, Japan took an even bolder step when it aimed to expel Westerners from China and establish its undivided empire there. The Japanese used propaganda to discredit the American and European policies, and attempted to direct the anti-imperialist movement toward the westerners among the Chinese people.

The Japanese accused the Americans and Europeans of not understanding the "spirit

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<sup>64</sup> Powell, *My 25 Years in China*, F 125, JBPP, 10-11.

<sup>65</sup> Louise Young, "Japan at War: History Writing on the Crisis of the 1930s" in *The Origin of the Second World War Reconsidered*, ed. Gordon Martel (London and New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 1992), 168.

<sup>66</sup> Jon Thares Davidann, "War Talk and John Dewey: Tensions concerning China," in *Cultural Diplomacy in U.S.-Japanese Relations, 1919-1941*(New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 43-44.

<sup>67</sup> Powell, *My 25 Years in China*, F 125, JBPP, 11.

of the people in Asia.” The message was that Americans and Europeans’ incompetent management in China resulted in a “Communist danger” and a “threat to the system of private property.”<sup>68</sup>

As a result, when the Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937, there was a heated American debate: should the United States remain neutral or join the war? Which side should the U.S. take? What would be the best solution for the American long-term interests in Asia?<sup>69</sup> At last, the majority agreed that to aid China and to oppose Japan served the best American long-term political and economic interests in Asia.<sup>70</sup> This policy certainly influenced the editorial attitudes of the American press in China.

Another obstacle for the American journalists and press in China was how to carry out American journalism principles in a dictatorial environment. For example, before most of the American journalists went to China, they were trained for a liberal press system, which supported the concepts of the freedom of the press, democracy, and individualism.<sup>71</sup> The conflicts were inevitable when the liberal-trained journalists encountered a wartime China environment, which did not support dissent and free speech.<sup>72</sup> The Japanese intimidated the American press as well as the others on many

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<sup>68</sup> M.I Sladkovsky, *China and Japan: Past and Present*, ed. and trans. Robert R. Price (Academic International Press, 1975), 119.

<sup>69</sup> N/A, *American’s Share in Japan’s War Guilt*, 15-25.

<sup>70</sup> Farley, *American Far Eastern Policy and the Sino-Japanese War*, 13-17.

<sup>71</sup> Volz and Lee, “American Pragmatism and Chinese Modernization: Importing the Missouri Model of Journalism Education to Modern China,” 7-9.

<sup>72</sup> Jennifer Ostini and Anthony Y. H. Fung, “Beyond the Four Theories of the Press: A New Model of National Media Systems,” *Mass Communication & Society*, 2002, 5(1), 41-56. 46-48.

occasions, especially in 1929 and thereafter, according to Leong.<sup>73</sup> After the second Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937, the Japanese military suppressed, bought out, or revised the foreign press in Japanese-controlled areas to suit Japanese news policies.<sup>74</sup>

The Japanese military conflicted with the foreign press in China mainly for several reasons. The foreign press published anti-Japanese news and reported Japanese activities. Many of the negative reports, which were forbidden to print in the Chinese newspapers, could be found in the foreign press. The foreign press also sent many critical articles out of China to various parts of the world, which “displeased” Japanese interests. Too, the Japanese had a long tradition of censoring the press and suppressing the criticisms against government officials, especially during wartime.<sup>75</sup> As early as the first Sino-Japanese War (1914-1918), the Japanese established a system of press control in Japan, which entitled the government to regulate Japanese public opinions about important political questions, and set up semi-official news agencies and various organizations to imbue the government’s point of views to both foreign visitors and the Japanese public. Meanwhile, in China, the Japanese manipulated a dozen of Chinese and English newspapers to propagandize its policies in East Asia, according to Millard.<sup>76</sup> When the Japanese first attacked China in 1931,

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<sup>73</sup> Leong, “The Effects of Censorship and Japanese Pressure on the Chinese and Foreign Press in China,” 95.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 128.

<sup>75</sup> Akihiko Haruhara, “Media in Japan” in *Historical Development of Media System: Japan* (Paris, 20 December 1979), 14-15.

<sup>76</sup> Thomas F. Millard, “International Publicity” in *Our Eastern Question* (New York: The Century

they tried to regulate the Chinese and foreign newspapers. As a result, the Japanese military censored the press, modified the press to reflect pro-Japanese perspectives, banned some uncooperative newspapers, arrested journalists, and expelled them out of China, even before the second Sino-Japanese War officially started in 1937, wrote Leong.<sup>77</sup>

### **Military versus Wartime Press**

The study of “journalism in wartime” has been a popular subject to examine the relations between the press and the military in wartime.<sup>78</sup> The role of a peacetime press would be different from that of a wartime press. In peacetime, the primary responsibilities of the press are to inform, to enlighten, and to illuminate, while in wartime, those responsibilities are subordinated to the government commands.

Winning the war becomes the sole goal for the whole nation.<sup>79</sup> The military emphasizes national patriotism and loyalty and demands unanimous obedience of every public organ. Government, even if it is a democratic or liberal one in the

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Co., 1916), 211

<sup>77</sup> Leong, “The Effects of Censorship and Japanese Pressure on the Chinese and Foreign Press in China,” 110-113.

<sup>78</sup> M. D. Boydston, “Press Censorship and Access Restrictions during the Persian Gulf War: A First Amendment analysis,” *Loyola of Los Angeles Law Review*, 25 (1992): 1073-1106; See too Stephen D. Cooper, “Press Controls in Wartime: The Legal, Historical, and Institutional Context,” *American Communication Journal* 6(4) 2003: 9-13; See too P. G. Cassell, “Restrictions on Press Coverage of Military Operations: The Right of Access, Grenada, and ‘off-the-record’ Wars,” *Georgetown Law Journal*, 73 (1985): 931-973; See too K. P. Kenealey, “The Persian Gulf War and the Press: Is There a Constitutional Right of Access to Military Operations?” *Northwestern University Law Review*, 87(1) 1992: 287-325.

<sup>79</sup> John H. Sorrells, “The Newspaper Goes to War,” in *Journalism at Wartime*, ed. Frank Luther Mott. (Washington D.C.: American Council on Public Affairs, 1943), 3-4.

peacetime, will grow more authoritative in wartime and applaud the military efforts.<sup>80</sup> Since public support is essential to victory, government and military demand the press, which carries and influences public opinions in the peacetime, to surrender its journalistic values in favor of national survival.<sup>81</sup> Thus, a great part of the responsibilities of the wartime press is not to inform, but to suppress, to guard, and to screen out information of the most interesting and damaging sort.<sup>82</sup> When the press refuses to abandon its values of freedom and liberty, government and military will force the press to do so.

The military controls the press to protect national security and win public support. As information during wartime can be a weapon, the military accuses the press of disclosing information to the enemy, which harms soldiers in the battlefield, or condemns the press as they disturb the public morale and opinions at home.<sup>83</sup> On other occasions, such as the American postwar occupation in Germany and Japan, the military manipulates the press to democratize the invaded countries and to eliminate the enemies' propaganda.<sup>84</sup> Once in a while, the military attempts to control the press purely to hide its own mistakes.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Betty Houchin Winfield, "Two Commanders-in Chief: Free Expression's Most Severe Tests." (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard College, Research Paper R-7, August 1992), 13.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>82</sup> Sorrells, "The Newspaper Goes to War," 3-4.

<sup>83</sup> Cooper, "Press Controls in Wartime: The Legal, Historical, and Institutional Context," 9-13; See too H.D.S Greenway, "The Warring Century," *Columbia Journalism Review* (September / October, 1999): 49-53.

<sup>84</sup> Larry Hartenian, "The Role of Media in Democratizing Germany: United States Occupation Policy 1945-1949," *Central European History* 20 (1987): 145-190.

The main military control methods over the wartime press include outraged censorship, when military has used both pre and post publication sanctions in overseas battlefronts and the home countries, and encouraged the press to adopt self-censorship. They also practice access restriction, when military monitors or directly cuts down the cable; thus, propaganda messages would replace the original news stories. Military officers escort correspondents everywhere, even to the bathroom. In addition, the military interferes with the news reporting by telling news sources, if available, what to say and how to say. The most egregious method is legal punishment. Often the military team up with politicians who protect the “military security” by law. Once the law approves the military regulations of the press, the military forces can imprison violators and shut down news outlets. This research will identify if various Japanese military control methods over the American press in China are similar. Through a case study on the *Review*, there will be a comparison of the likenesses and differences of the Japanese controls with the overall patterns in history.

Historical incidents as well as documentary evidences show that two patterns of military controls occur when two countries fight: a military controls one’s own press or a military controls its enemy’s press. Following this track, scholars focused on either how the Chinese Nationalist Party controlled the Chinese native press or how the Japanese military controlled the Chinese press.<sup>86</sup> However, these

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<sup>85</sup> Cooper, “Press Controls in Wartime: The Legal, Historical, and Institutional Context,” 9-13.

<sup>86</sup> See Leong, “The Effects of Censorship and Japanese Pressure on the Chinese and Foreign Press in China.”

approaches neglected a very distinct phenomenon. China, due to its semi-colonial and complex political conflicts in the 1930s, became a unique battlefield that attracted not only the Chinese and Japanese journalists, but also the Western journalists who were looking for exciting stories. The Japanese militaries attempted to control the American-owned press and journalists in China, even before the U.S. officially joined the Asia-Pacific War in December 1941. Since the American-owned press in China served as an outsider to the Sino-Japanese War, Japan could not ally the American press in the name of “patriotism” or “national loyalty.” Neither could the Japanese claim “winning public support” fully explain the Japanese military controls over the foreign press in China, as such publications served a different public audience from the native Japanese or Chinese press. Moreover, the conflict between the liberal-trained Western reporters and the dictatorial Japanese military in a semi-colonial environment was more complicated than an argument of press freedom versus national security in wartime. Even though some literature depicted the obstacles of the foreign press or journalists in China during this period, most results were autobiographies, travel memos, and memoirs of individuals.<sup>87</sup> Since no current

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<sup>87</sup> See H.G.W Woodhead, *Adventures in Far Eastern Journalism* (Nishikicho, Kanda, Tokyo: The Hokuseido Press, 1935); See too Corporal Ashihei Hino, *Wheat and Soldiers*, trans. Baroness Shidzue Ishimoto (New York, Toronto: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc, 1939); See too Sargent Key, *Eighty-eight Years of Commercial Progress Ruined: Shanghai Shelled and Bombed* (Shanghai: N/A, 1932); See too John Hobenberg, “Storm Clouds over China” in *Foreign Correspondents: the Great Reporters and Their Times* (New York and London, Columbia University Press, 1964); See too Paul Frillmann and Graham Peck, *China—the Remembered Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968); See too Robert W. Barnett, *Economic Shanghai: Hostage to Politics 1937-1941* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1941); See too S. Bernard Thomas, *Season of High Adventure: Edgar Snow in China* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1996); See too Theodore H White and Annalee Jacoby, *Thunder out of China* (New York: William Sloane Associates, Inc., 1946.); See too Dick Wilson, *When Tigers Fight: The Story of the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945* (New York: The Viking Press, 1982).

studies can fully explain this phenomenon, this research will investigate the conflict between military and wartime press in an extended vision, in which the Japanese military attempted to control American journalists in China during the second Sino-Japanese War.

### **Foreign Press in the Second Sino-Japanese War: 1937-1945**

After the war started in 1937, the Japanese military aggressively began controlling the foreign press and journalists in China. According to the official record of the Nationalist Party, more than 500 foreign journalists, representing newspapers, magazines, radio systems, and press associations as well as freelancers were in China during the second Sino-Japanese War.<sup>88</sup> The journalists and photographers of the foreign newspapers, magazines, books, news agencies, foreign-owned English-language publications all fell into the iron hand of the Japanese military. Immediately after the Marco Polo Bridge incident near Peiping in July, 1937<sup>89</sup>, the U.S. and British journalists stationed in the city could not telegraph their home stations; the Japanese cut the last telegraph wire from Peiping. The Japanese jeopardized two newspapers and imprisoned their editors in Peiping, either because the press printed a “fair and unbiased report,” or “swung sharply and loyally to

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<sup>88</sup> Tong, ed., “The Press” in *China Handbook: 1937-1945*, 510.

<sup>89</sup> Note: Chinese history scholars consider the Marco Polo Bridge incident as the starting point of the Japanese full-scale invasion of China. On July 7, 1937, the Japanese troops opened fire with the Chinese military near the bridge.

Nanking, the capital of the Nationalist Party,” wrote Leong.<sup>90</sup> A few months later, the Japanese aviators killed Pembroke Stephens, correspondent of the *London Daily Telegraph*, when he was covering a battle between the Japanese and Chinese.

Before the Japanese fully occupied the International Settlement of Shanghai in 1941, they had tried repeatedly, following their invasion of Shanghai in 1937, to seize copies of the English-language newspapers in mail, which they accomplished by controlling the Chinese post offices.<sup>91</sup> In addition, they treated correspondents as spies. To write their stories, the foreign journalists had to overcome countless obstacles and sometimes risked their lives.<sup>92</sup> The first case of the Japanese interference with foreign correspondents happened in January 1938, when the Japanese forbade H. J. Timperley, the correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, to send news through cable offices in Shanghai. The Japanese officials accused Timperley’s articles of mentioning atrocities perpetrated by the Japanese soldiers in Nanking and other cities. Also that year, the Japanese banned the mail circulation of the *Shanghai Evening Post*, because the newspaper printed what they called “very anti-Japanese” articles.<sup>93</sup> They used other control methods, too, including bribery, intimidations of newspaper proprietors, imprisonments, and even executions of editors.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Leong, “The Effects of Censorship and Japanese Pressure on the Chinese and Foreign Press in China,” 114.

<sup>91</sup> Powell, “Publishing in Shanghai,” 75.

<sup>92</sup> Morris, “Covering the War against Japan,” 67-70.

<sup>93</sup> Leong, “The Effects of Censorship and Japanese Pressure on the Chinese and Foreign Press in China,” 11.

<sup>94</sup> Powell, “Publishing in Shanghai,” 74; See too Morris, “Covering the War against Japan,” 71.

The second Sino-Japanese War became a disaster for both the Chinese and foreign newspapers in China. As many as a thousand foreign newspaper printers, press-men and office employees were thrown out of work. The Japanese destruction not only prevented the press from operating, but also resulted in great financial loss.<sup>95</sup> News agencies quickly moved out of China to other Asian countries that were far from the war zones. Transmission facilities that were the result of years of developments were lost almost overnight.<sup>96</sup> Even though a few scholars, such as Leong and Ting, have mentioned the controls over the foreign press, more could be done as both of them examined the control methods before 1937. The press was not the main subject of their research, and the studies generally included only peripheral description of the controls over the foreign press, and pieced them together chronologically. Therefore, this study aims to enhance the academic understanding of the military controls over independent press of neutral states in wartime by highlighting the Japanese military controls over one independent American journalist John B. Powell and his Shanghai journal the *Review*.

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<sup>95</sup> Powell, "Publishing in Shanghai," 74.

<sup>96</sup> Morris, "Covering the War against Japan," 71.

## CHAPTER TWO

### **JOHN B. POWELL AND *THE CHINA WEEKLY REVIEW*: AN INDEPENDENT AMERICAN JOURNALIST AND A SHANGHAI JOURNAL**

The popularity of the English-language press in Shanghai in the early twentieth century was a unique phenomenon in Chinese journalism history. Western powers' semi-colonizing Shanghai created a market for those press to serve both Chinese and foreign English-language readers. Most of those publications, which did not exist before the mid-nineteenth century, originated, published, and circulated primarily in China. They were not like current *The New York Times* overseas edition, or the *Fortune* licensed Chinese-language copy in Asia, which has either an administrative or business tie with media groups in the U.S. Rather, the foreign publications discussed here were the private-owned foreign enterprises in China. Such a press represented a variety of voices of different interest groups.

This chapter will cover the background of John B. Powell and the *Review*. The main purpose here is to argue that Powell and his journal exemplified the non-affiliated foreign journalists and publications in Shanghai during the second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945). The background of John B. Powell tries to answer the following questions: why did Powell go to China?

What did Powell do in China as a journalist? What did Powell achieve out of his twenty-five years' China reporting? The background of the *Review* will answer the following questions: why did Thomas Millard and John B. Powell establish the journal? What were the editorial policies, content, readership, circulation, and advertising of the journal?

### **John B. Powell: an American Journalist in China for Twenty-five Years**

#### ***Powell Went to Shanghai: Why Did American Journalists Go To Asia***

John B. Powell, born in 1888 on a northeast Missouri farm near Palmyra, earned his way through high school and Business College by delivering two newspapers. That early part-time job was a starting point of Powell's life-long journalism profession. He worked as an entry-level reporter in the old Quincy before he went to the University of Missouri in Columbia. In 1910, Powell earned a bachelor's degree of journalism as one of the first six graduates of the School of Journalism at the University of Missouri. After that, he worked for *The Courier-Post* in Hannibal as a circulation solicitor, advertising manager, and city editor for two years. In 1912, he accepted an instructor position and taught advertising courses at the Missouri School of Journalism until 1917.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Powell, *My 25 Years in China*, F 61, JBPP, 2; See too, Sara Lockwood Williams, *Twenty Years of Education for Journalism: a History of the School of Journalism of the University of Missouri Columbia, Missouri, U.S.A.* (Columbia, Missouri: The E. W. Stephens Publishing Company, 1929), 32; See too, Helen Jo Scott, "Missouri Alumni in Journalism," in the *University of Missouri Bulletin* 29 (1923): 65.

Powell's twenty-five years of reporting in China began with an unexpected job offer. One day, Dean Walter Williams handed Powell a cablegram from Thomas Millard, an earlier graduate of the university who had become widely known as the correspondent of *The New York Herald* in Asia. Millard wished to employ a graduate of the school to assist him in starting a paper in Shanghai.<sup>98</sup> Before receiving Millard's message, Powell had been deciding between two U.S.-based offers: one was from the publisher of a trade journal in a Midwestern city, and the other was an assistant general manager position of a newspaper in a thriving southern city.<sup>99</sup>

Powell recalled that he hesitated to take those offers. He did not want to leave the university, especially when the new school of journalism was developing rapidly, and was attracting students from all over the U.S., and even from foreign countries.<sup>100</sup> For Powell, Asia was a remote and unknown land; he only had a very brief reference of China and Japan from history classes in high school,<sup>101</sup> and gained a very narrow picture about China from the only two books then in the university library.<sup>102</sup> Yet, Powell's interest in China was mainly triggered by two Chinese students in the journalism school: Hin Wang, the first international student of the school; and Hollington K. Tong, who was later associated with Powell for the

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<sup>98</sup> Powell, *My 25 Years in China*, F 61, JBPP, 2.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, F 60, JBPP, 3.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, F 61, JBPP, 4.

editorship of the *Review*.<sup>103</sup> Powell mentioned that his parents and two teachers, possibly Walter Williams included, also encouraged him to transit from academia to professional track.<sup>104</sup>

In 1917, Powell decided to go to Shanghai for a more exciting life that he could ever have in mid-Missouri, where the biggest event in town was the annual football game with a neighboring state university.<sup>105</sup> Going to China became an important turning point for Powell as he said in the manuscript:

I had made a considerable and daring jump because my previous position had been that of an instructor in a mid-western university; my profession from then on was to be journalism of a far more practical nature than had been the theoretical courses I had taken in the university and passed on to later generations of students.<sup>106</sup>

Powell did not sufficiently explain in his manuscript or in autobiography why a Missouri farm boy had to go to China to make a living. After comparing secondary sources, these factors may be responsible for Powell's decision: his desire for more industry experiences; Dean Williams' promotion of world journalism; and the strong early connection between the Missouri School of Journalism and China. Each factor was rooted in a bigger historical context.

The advanced education at the world's first journalism school undoubtedly influenced Powell's career path. World War I raised American readers' demand of

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 2; See too, Powell, 1942-1947, F 139, JBPP, 1;

According to the Centennial Directory of Missouri School of Journalism, Hin Wang, B.S. 1912, was the first international student graduate from Missouri School of Journalism. He later became the chair of the Department of Journalism at Yenching University in China, a program that was sponsored by and modeled after the Missouri School of Journalism.

<sup>104</sup> Powell, *My 25 Years in China*, F 61, JBPP, 4-5.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., F 60, JBPP, 2.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., F 59, JBPP, 1.

world news. The power of the press, and the increasing number of people who were interested in newspaper industry triggered a chain reaction of establishing journalism schools nationwide.<sup>107</sup> Thus, “training for journalism as a profession” became the primary purpose of the Missouri School of Journalism.<sup>108</sup> To best achieve this mission, Dean Williams stressed two major teaching philosophies from the very beginning: the best way to learn journalism is by doing it; and journalism is a world profession.<sup>109</sup>

Williams carried out the first philosophy by establishing the *University Missourian*, where students practiced their journalistic skills in a genuine newsroom.<sup>110</sup> The blending of practical and theoretical studies was not only required for students, but also for faculty members. Throughout the history of the school, the standard was that teachers of professional courses should have experiences in newspaper industry. For example, the first few teachers of professional courses were all experienced newspapermen: Walter Williams had been an editor of *The Columbia Herald* and *The Boonville Advertiser*. Silas Bent came to the school from the staff of *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, and Charles Ross from *The St. Louis Republic*.<sup>111</sup> Working with such a crew, Powell probably wanted to acquire more practical experiences, since he had worked only for two small town newspapers for two or three years.

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<sup>107</sup> Sara Lockwood Williams, *Twenty Years of Education for Journalism: a History of the School of Journalism of the University of Missouri Columbia, Missouri, U.S.A.* (Columbia, Missouri: The E. W. Stephens Publishing Company, 1929), 6.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 53-56.

<sup>109</sup> Rucker, *Walter Williams*, 164.

<sup>110</sup> Williams, *Twenty Years of Education for Journalism: a History of the School of Journalism of the University of Missouri Columbia, Missouri, U.S.A.*, 30.

<sup>111</sup> Frank W. Rucker, *Walter Williams*, (Columbia: Missouri Publishing Association Inc, 1964), 144.

The other philosophy of Dean Williams', was the ideal of world journalism, which encouraged a generation of journalists to go overseas. In turn, the overseas Missouri alumni attracted more Missouri graduates, such as Powell, to work in foreign countries. After World War I, Cheng wrote that Williams realized that the new world journalism should no longer only serve the neighbors next door, but should also serve the life of the world.<sup>112</sup> Williams wrote that journalism applied to the universal needs and interests of human life:

Journalism, universal in its concern, existence and appeal, is a world-profession. As a world-profession it is fairly representative of the world. Altogether, whatever the apparent exceptions, journalism is everywhere better than the average man would make it, if it has not everywhere attained to what the best would wish. And the tendency in the world's journalism is toward higher things.<sup>113</sup>

From 1902 to 1904, and from 1913 to 1914, Williams traveled to over 2,000 newspaper organizations in the world.<sup>114</sup> Subsequently, Williams advocated world journalism to a higher level: American journalists should not only participate in the world journalism industry, but should also deliver American journalism principles to the rest of the world. He compared the characteristics of British, German, French, Chinese, Russian, Australian, and Japanese papers to American ones, and concluded that the American journalism was the best among all of them:

The American type of newspaper is more audacious than any of its foreign contemporaries, more smartly written, more attractively printed. It

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<sup>112</sup> Ju-shien Cheng, "Walter Williams and China, His Influence on Chinese Journalism" (M.A. thesis, University of Missouri, 1963), 47.

<sup>113</sup> Walter Williams, "The World's Journalism," in the *University of Missouri Bulletin* 16 (1915): 3.

<sup>114</sup> Lau, "The University of Missouri and Journalism of China," 33-34.

is more liable to error because it emphasizes swiftness of publication and, frequently, has cheap labor in its production... The American newspaper, however, in news facilities, in persuasive appeal to all classes, as a general medium for exchange of thought, is unsurpassed... The American type, which is largely influencing the world's journalism, is being influenced to a less degree by the world's journalism...<sup>115</sup>

The ambition of spreading the merits of American journalism to the world also mirrored American's transitioning foreign policies in the early twentieth century. Following the European colonists, the U.S. power grew in East Asia by acquiring Philippine Islands in 1898. The U.S. further pushed the major colonial powers to accept the Chinese Open Door Policy in 1899, which ensured that the European and Japanese partitions of China would not threaten American commercial interests in Asia.<sup>116</sup> From then on, the U.S. moved from President Washington's (1789-1797) isolationism to President Theodore Roosevelt (1901-1909) and Wilson's (1913-1921) internationalism. Roosevelt had called for the U.S. to assume its proper role as a world policeman and colonial master.<sup>117</sup> Moreover, President Wilson showed more missionary characteristics in his Asian policies. He focused on moral services that would gently help the weak and refine the American spirit. He wrote that the U.S. had a duty to "play a part, and a leading part at that, in the opening and transformation of the East."<sup>118</sup> For example, Wilson saw as an obligation helping the Chinese become

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>116</sup> Liu, "First Contact with the West: 1784-1910" in *U.S.-China Relations, 1784-1992*, 16-20.

<sup>117</sup> Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987), 128.

<sup>118</sup> Arthur S. Link et al., eds., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson* (Princeton, 1966- ), 11:440, 12:18, 14:433, 18:104, quoted in Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 129.

Christian and democratic and to protect them against the Japanese, though that philosophy did not work out practically, according to Hunt.<sup>119</sup>

Sharing a similar missionary spirit, Dean Williams responded to the call for internationalism by promoting the concept of world journalism. Williams accomplished this mission by advocating international journalism education at home; encouraging graduates to work overseas; and strengthening the school's international relations with worldwide media groups, journalists, and academic institutions. Powell taught at the journalism school exactly during the period when Missouri students and alumni applied Williams' ideas to their studies and works. Both the events of this historical time and the strong encouragement of Dean Williams motivated Powell to accept Millard's offer.

The strong China connection with the Missouri school in the early twentieth century probably influenced Powell's decision to go to China, rather than other foreign countries. As a part of Williams' international missions, the Missouri School of Journalism had been involved in Chinese modern journalism education since 1917.<sup>120</sup> Williams' goal to enhance the understanding between the developed and underdeveloped nations can be seen through Powell's China experience. Williams was quoted as saying that "journalists, like diplomats and clergymen, should do their best to secure a permanent peace in the world by getting people to understand each other."<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 133.

<sup>120</sup> Lau, "University of Missouri and Journalism of China," 35-36.

<sup>121</sup> Cheng, "Walter Williams and China: His Influence on Chinese Journalism," 14

From the 1900s to 1930s, Williams traveled at least three times to China to promote the modern American journalism philosophies and techniques.<sup>122</sup> He helped establish several journalism programs in some prestigious Chinese universities, started a five-year student / scholar exchange program between the Missouri School of Journalism and Yenching University, and lectured to Chinese university students.<sup>123</sup> In addition, phenomenal Missouri alumni in Asia also attracted many Missouri graduates. Whenever those alumni wanted someone to work for the American newspapers in Asia, the first query usually went to Dean Williams. For example, Millard said that this chain effect had brought about twenty-five Missouri students to Japan and China during 1913 to 1928.<sup>124</sup> Powell was one of the earliest Missouri graduates who were recruited through the alumni's network in Asia. In years, he too would inspire many followers to go to China.

### ***Powell Corresponded in China: A Journalist in a Trend of China Reporting***

When Powell arrived in Shanghai, he soon found out that Millard had done nothing to get the paper started, aside from purchasing a typesetter and a supply of the paper. He then realized that he was officiate at the birth of the new American journal, serving both as a “mid-wife and wet-nurse”.<sup>125</sup> Powell worked as an

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 9, 45.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 46, 52. Such universities included Yencheng University, which established the first journalism program that adopted a Missouri-like model.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>125</sup> Powell, *My 25 Years in China*, F 60, JBPP, 5.

associate editor and business manager of the *Millard's Review of the Far East* (the original name of *The China Weekly Review*) from 1917 to November 30, 1918, when Millard left the paper. In the next 25 years, Powell worked as the editor until the Japanese fully controlled Shanghai in 1941.<sup>126</sup> Meanwhile, Powell also edited *The China Press*, the first typical American daily newspaper in Shanghai, from 1923 to 1925.<sup>127</sup> Before the Sino-Japanese War started, Powell covered some significant Chinese political incidents, such as the Chinese warlords' civil wars from 1917 to 1927; the war between China and Soviet Russia in Manchuria in 1929; the Sino-Japanese conflict in Manchuria in 1931; and the dramatic kidnapping of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek from 1936 to 1937.<sup>128</sup>

Besides working primarily for the *Review* and *The China Press*, Powell corresponded for some American and British newspapers occasionally. Since 1918, Powell worked as a special foreign correspondent for *The Chicago Tribune*, through which many of Powell's articles reached American audience at home. However, after the *Tribune* cut off their China bureau in 1938, Powell was self-employed since then.<sup>129</sup> Powell also served eleven years from 1925 to 1936 as a correspondent of *The Manchester Guardian*, a leading liberal paper in England, and of *The Daily Herald*, an organ of the British Labor Party.<sup>130</sup> In addition, Powell cooperated on various

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<sup>126</sup> Chen, "John B. Powell and China," 30.

<sup>127</sup> Introduction to Powell's collection, JBPP, 1.

<sup>128</sup> Powell, *Speeches*, 1943, F 12, JBPP, 4.

<sup>129</sup> Introduction to Powell's collection, JBPP, 1; See too, Powell, *My 25 Years in China*, F 119, JBPP, 1.

<sup>130</sup> Chen, "John B. Powell and China," 25.

occasions with correspondents of *The New York Herald Tribune* and *The Associated Press* to cover important events.<sup>131</sup> Powell split his time between industry and academia. While working as a journalist, Powell also taught the first advertising class as a part of the Missouri journalism program in Shanghai in 1917.<sup>132</sup> He organized study clubs and classes to discuss current events among Shanghai college students.<sup>133</sup>

As a list of Missouri journalists in Asia revealed, Powell was one of the American pioneers who went to China purely for establishing a newspaper business. Powell later recounted that a total of 75 Missouri journalism graduates worked in Asia at various times from the 1910s to the 1940s.<sup>134</sup> Powell's papers *The China Press* and the *Review* served as the boot-camps for new graduates from both Chinese universities and the Missouri School of Journalism. Many of those graduates made their first stops at Powell's papers and later on transited to larger newspapers or agencies. For example, Horace Felton, Bachelor of Journalism (B.J.) 1920, once worked for the *Review* and *The China Press* in Shanghai, and later on became the editor of a paper in Bangkok, and a reporter of *The Los Angeles Times* after he returned to the U.S.;<sup>135</sup> Edgar Snow, who was a Missouri student from 1925 to 1926, served several months on staff at the *Review* before he resigned to correspond for *The*

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<sup>131</sup> Powell, *My 25 Years in China*, F 125, JBPP, 1.

<sup>132</sup> Lau, "University of Missouri and Journalism of China," 35-36.

<sup>133</sup> Powell, *My Twenty-Five Years in China*, 13.

<sup>134</sup> John B. Powell, "Missouri Authors and Journalists in the Orient," *Missouri Historical Review*, October 1946, F 193, JBPP, 52-53.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 50-51.

*London Daily Herald* and *The Saturday Evening Post*.<sup>136</sup> It was very likely that Powell and the other pioneers served as role models to attract a generation of those American journalists who started their professions in Asia.

Powell was among a generation of American journalists in China who held multiple positions by being involved in both the journalism industry and education. The demand for American journalism teachers rose especially after a dozen of Chinese universities started journalism programs after 1921. Some of those newspapermen balanced the teaching tasks very well with their news businesses. For instance, Don Patterson, B.J. 1917, taught twice a week in Shanghai's St. John's University, while serving as the advertising manager of the *Review*.<sup>137</sup> Others focused more on teaching journalism to the Chinese students and journalists. For example, Maurice E. Votaw, B.J. 1919, taught journalism at St. John's University in Shanghai from 1922 to 1939, until he went to Nanking and then to Chungking to serve on board of the Chinese Ministry of Information.<sup>138</sup> Others, such as Powell, were involved primarily in news businesses, which provided boot-camps for Chinese and American journalists.<sup>139</sup> Powell was not the only one who corresponded for multiple foreign publications as well as published his own newspapers in China. For example, Hollington K. Tong, who once worked with Powell on the *Review*, later on directed a

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>137</sup> Lau, "The University of Missouri and Journalism of China," 36-37.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 39-40; Introduction to Votaw, Maurice E., C3672, Papers (1909-1978), Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri, Columbia.

<sup>139</sup> Rucker, *Walter Williams*, 114.

newspaper in Tientsin and corresponded for publications in the U.S. and England; Thomas Millard edited *The China Press*, and the *Review*, while corresponding for *The New York Herald*. The list could go on and on.<sup>140</sup> Those people, motivated by Williams' world journalism ideal, saw their work as very timely and necessary to China's modernization. The introduction of American principles would cultivate the Chinese to think critically and independently, Lau wrote.<sup>141</sup> Along with the introduction of American journalism, the popular ideas of American idealism, realism, and internationalism all swarmed into China.<sup>142</sup>

However, Powell lost the affiliation with a home publication after *The Chicago Tribune* cut off its international sections on December 15, 1937 and fired all staff in China, including Powell.<sup>143</sup> From then on, Powell lost an institutional connection with a home publication. Thus, this study examines Powell's journalist experience at the *Review* from August 1937 to December 1941, a time when Powell consistently covered the news, regardless of Japan's increasing aggression throughout Asia.

Powell also brought his family along during his China adventure. His son, John William Powell, managing editor of the *Review* since mid 1940s, was born in Shanghai on July 3, 1919 to Martha Hinton Powell and John B. Powell. In 1920, J. B. Powell sent his son back to the United States to live with his wife's family in

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<sup>140</sup> Williams, *Twenty Years of Education for Journalism: a History of the School of Journalism of the University of Missouri Columbia, Missouri, U.S.A*, 146-147.

<sup>141</sup> Lau, "The University of Missouri and Journalism of China," 39; See too, Cheng, "Walter Williams and China: His Influence on Chinese Journalism," 15.

<sup>142</sup> Volz and Lee, "American Pragmatism and Chinese Modernization: Importing the Missouri Model of Journalism Education to Modern China," 6-11.

<sup>143</sup> Powell, *My 25 Years in China*, F 119, JBPP, 1.

Hannibal, Missouri. In 1940, J. W. Powell arrived in Shanghai without informing his father ahead of time, and helped publishing the *China Press*, and the *Review*. In 1941, J. W. Powell left Shanghai on one of the last American ships which the Japanese allowed out of the city.<sup>144</sup>

Powell's life quickly changed in December 1941. The Japanese military arrested Powell on what he said was the charge of "having been engaged in a secret pro-Chungking and anti-Japanese information service."<sup>145</sup> The Japanese threw him into a prison camp for six months,<sup>146</sup> where Powell lost 85 pounds, one foot and much of the other.<sup>147</sup> Even though Powell later returned to the U.S. on the first trip of rescue ship "Gripsholm" in August 1942, he never fully recovered.<sup>148</sup> After his death, Powell's colleague and long time close friend Victor Keen, the correspondent of *The New York Herald Tribune* in China, clearly revealed that Powell almost died of Japanese imprisonment. He said,

The late Mr. Powell was a man of utmost integrity who died because he fearlessly upheld American ideals and policy in China in his editorial columns thereby incurring the enmity of the Japanese whose aggressions in China he criticized.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> O'Brien, *An American Editor in Early Revolutionary China: John William Powell and the China Weekly / Monthly Review*, 2-3.

<sup>145</sup> FCC London Cable Bureau Report, June 15, 1942, F 2, JBPP, 1.

<sup>146</sup> Powell, "I Was a Prisoner of the Japs," F 23, JBPP, 1-2.

<sup>147</sup> Tong, *China and the World Press*, 24.

<sup>148</sup> O'Brien, *an American Editor in Early Revolutionary China: John William Powell and the China Weekly / Monthly Review*, 3.

<sup>149</sup> Victor Keen, letter to John B. Dunlap, May 31, 1952, F 6, JBPP, 1.

The letter was to defend that Powell was eligible to receive a donation made of hundreds of people after he returned to the States. Victor had known Powell in Shanghai for 13 years. The Japanese arrested them on the same day. For a time, Victor shared Powell's cell. They both were repatriated on the "Gripsholm" arriving in New York in August 1942.

### ***Remember Powell: an Independent American Journalist in Wartime China***

This study argues that Powell was an independent journalist from a neutral state. He represented a group of independent journalists who worked for publications that were printed in China during the Sino-Japanese war without an affiliation with any media institution of his own countries. He claimed to be independence by not lining up with Japan or China during the Sino-Japanese conflict, and relying on subscription and advertising fees for main revenue. However, his editorial opinions, as the study later showed, did not remain neutral as the war went on. He cared more about American interests in China, and was against the Japanese aggression. Even so, his home country, the United States did not declare war against the Japanese before December 1941. The United States claimed to be neutral to the Sino-Japanese conflict during the period, August 1937 to December 1941. Therefore, this paper argued that Powell stood for an independent journalist from a neutral state.

Powell was one among many other American independent journalists who managed their won publications without institutional support back then. According to the 1935 *China Yearbook*, Shanghai had five to six other American publications which originated and circulated mainly in China.<sup>150</sup> Although these publications were owned by the American originally, they were edited or co-owned by the Chinese later on. Some even received subsidies from the Japanese or the Chinese interests group and therefore lost their independence. C. V. Starr, an American insurance man who resided in New York, owned the *Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury*. The *China*

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<sup>150</sup> H. G. W. Woodhead (Eds). *The China Year Book, 1935* (Chicago ILL: University of Chicago Press, 1935), 591.

*Press* was owned by Chinese-American interests. The *Far Eastern Review*, an engineering journal originally started by an American, was taken over by Japanese interests. The *China Digest*, another magazine published by an American, also followed a pro-Japanese policy. Powell and his journal, the *Review*, distinguished themselves by claiming to be American-owned, and independent financially from the Chinese or Japanese influence.<sup>151</sup>

Powell's journalistic career in China was compelling. His achievements were remarkable, as he consistently tried to defend American interests in China. His fearlessness to cover the Sino-Japanese war under Japanese invasion eventually earned him honors and recognition from his colleagues, academic institutions and officials both in China and in the U.S.

In 1942, the Missouri School of Journalism honored Powell the highest award that the school gives to journalists: a medal for distinguished service in journalism. Acting Dean J. Edward Gerald wrote a letter to Powell's daughter Hensley on April 29, 1942, concerning a draft of citation for the Medal of Honor. The letter best summarized Powell's journalist career and achievements:

To J.B. Powell, a member of the first graduating class of the School of Journalism and now a prisoner of the Japanese in China: for his quarter of a century of service as editor and publisher of *The China Weekly Review* in interpreting the Asia to the Occident; for his outstanding achievements as correspondent for *The Manchester Guardian* and *The Chicago Tribune* in reporting the Nationalist Revolution in Central and South China, the Russo-Japanese conflict on the Siberian border, and the Japanese conquest of Manchuria; for his series of articles for *The Chicago Tribune* dealing with the Russo-Japanese crisis and preparations for war in the Far East; for his work as special representative of American commercial interests in

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<sup>151</sup> Powell, "Publishing in Shanghai," 72.

China at Washington from 1920 to 1922 which resulted in Congressional enactment of the China Trade Act; for his courage, despite repeated threats and attempts upon his life, in revealing to the world and denouncing the aggressive intentions of Japan in Asia.<sup>152</sup>

After Powell died in 1947, American and Chinese governors and media organizations further recognized Powell's contributions to the journalism industry, Sino-U.S. relations, and American interests in Asia. Two Missouri senators, Forrest C. Donnell and James P. Kem honored Powell in Congress by saying,

“Mr. Powell was notably distinguished by his clear perception of the designs of Japan upon China and by his courageous and persistent warning to the world that the Japanese possessed such intentions.”<sup>153</sup>

The President Chiang Kai-shek of the Chinese Nationalist Party expressed his sincere respect to Powell in a letter to Powell's widow and family members, which said:

The Chinese government and people will always remember your great husband who, throughout the last war, championed China's cause through his righteous and mighty pen.<sup>154</sup>

Helen M. Loomis, the executive secretary represented the American China Policy Association, Inc., delivered a special memorial essay of Powell on April 22, 1947. She said,

J. B. Powell exemplified in his 25 years in China the finest principles of American citizenship and contributed to the friendly relationship between China and the United States, so serving both the best interests of American journalism, business and culture in China and those of forward-looking democratic Chinese in the building of modern China and the maintaining of the freedom and territorial

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<sup>152</sup> J. Edward Gerald, letter to Hensley Powell, April 29, 1942, F 2, JBPP, 1.

<sup>153</sup> Forrest C. Donnell and James PP. Kem, “Tribune to the late John B. Powell,” *Congressional Record, Proceedings and Debates of the 80th Congress, First Session* (U.S.: Government Printing Office, 1947), 1-2.

<sup>154</sup> *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 105, No.2, March 8, 1947, 33.

integrity of their nation....<sup>155</sup>

Leading newspapers in China and the U.S. published articles to review Powell's dramatic reporting experiences in China and his achievements. Some of these notable papers included *The China Press*, *Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury*, *China Daily News*, and even *The North China Daily News*, the longtime British rival of the *Review* since 1910s.<sup>156</sup> The newspapers in the U.S. also showed great sympathy to Powell.

*The Kansas City Times* praised Powell as "a pioneer in that series of fine young newspapermen that was sent out to Asia by the Missouri School of Journalism".<sup>157</sup> The paper said that Powell was among few Americans in Asia that alerted the world of the Japanese military threats at an early stage:

As managing editor of *The China Weekly Review* at Shanghai, John Powell early showed a real understanding of Chinese character and a comprehension of Japanese to establish an overlordship in China. For many years he was a voice crying in the wilderness, warning his countrymen against the danger of the conflict he so clearly saw impending.<sup>158</sup>

*The Washington Post* applauded for Powell's courage.<sup>159</sup> *The New York Times* recognized his "heroic stature" in facing the Japanese military:

John B. Powell, hobbling painfully about on his crutches, never thought of himself as a hero. But Japanese hatred and stubborn American courage raised him inevitably to heroic stature. He died as he

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<sup>155</sup> Helen M. Loomis, newsletter of the American China Policy Association, Inc., April 22, 1947, F 6, correspondences, 1944-1952, JBPP, 1-2.

<sup>156</sup> *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 105, No. 2, March 8, 1947, 33.

<sup>157</sup> Forrest C. Donnell and James PP. Kem, "Tribune to the late John B. Powell," 3.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

lived, fighting to the end for his convictions... Soon convinced that Japan intended to swallow China, he made it his mission to warn the world. Threats, bribe offers and bombing never swerved him...<sup>160</sup>

As these comments suggest, Powell's most significant contribution was his courage in facing the Japanese military suppression, and his dedication to journalistic principles in covering a foreign war. Therefore, this paper will emphasize Powell's journalistic conflict with the Japanese invading military during the Sino-Japanese War from August 1937 to December 1941. An analysis of Powell's wartime reporting will probably serve as a clue to understand: How did the conflict between the Japanese military and American journalists come into being? Why did American independent journalists, such as Powell, risk their lives to report in a foreign war? With Powell as an example, how did the conflict become so severe that American journalists became the casualty of war between China and Japan?

### ***The Review: an Independent American Journal Thrived and Suspended in Wartime China***

Powell was not the founder, yet he was an early editor working for Thomas Millard, the founder. During Powell's 25-years' editorship, the *Review* grew into "one of the most noteworthy examples of an English-language access point to a period of Asian journalism."<sup>161</sup> Compared to its first issue in 1917, the *Review*

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Elliott S. Parker and Emelia M. Parker, *Asian Journalism: a Selected Bibliography of Sources on Journalism in China and Southeast Asia* (Metuchen, N.J., & London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1979), 393.

doubled its size to 60 pages, and tripled its circulation to over 6,000 copies per issue before the Japanese shut down the paper in 1941. The *Review* provided unique American perspectives of the most significant historical periods of modern China, such as the Nationalist and Communism conflict and Sino-Japanese conflict in the 1930s. More importantly, it exemplified how an independent American journal thrived in a chaotic China, wounded during wartime condition, and eventually suspended under military controls.

### ***American Newspapermen Gained a Foothold on the British-dominated Market***

Thomas Millard, a former correspondent of *The New York Herald*, found the *Review* in June 1917 in Shanghai. At first, Millard named the journal as *The Millard's Review of the Far East*. From 1917 to 1922, the journal changed its name for several times and finally settled down with “the *Review*” in 1923.<sup>162</sup> John. B. Powell served as the assistant editor from 1917 to 1918, when Millard withdrew from the editorship to accept a position as an adviser to the Chinese Nationalist government. Powell took over the editorship in 1918, and bought out Millard’s share of the journal in 1923. From then on, Powell took charge of the journal as the editor-in-chief almost until his death in 1947.<sup>163</sup> Yin divided the period of the *Review* into three parts based on its editorship in different historical backgrounds. The first part covered the period from June 1917 to May 1923, when Millard managed the

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<sup>162</sup> Chen, “John B. Powell and China,” 30.

<sup>163</sup> Powell, miscellaneous manuscripts, 1942-1947, F 139, JBPP, 1-2.

journal under the name of *The Millard's Review of the Far East*. The second period lasted from June 1923 to December 1941, when Powell edited the journal and changed the name to the *Review*. The third period was from October 1945 to July 1953, when William Powell, John Powell's son, edited the journal.<sup>164</sup> Since this research focuses on the time between August 1937 and December 1941, it will emphasize the second period of the journal and briefly talk about the first period as an introduction.

The *Review* was not the first American publication in Shanghai, and was certainly not the first foreign newspaper. By the time that Millard started the journal, Shanghai had already become the publishing center for both Chinese and foreign-language newspapers in China. Among the 44 newspapers then, 25 headquartered in Shanghai, according to the 1919-1920 *China Yearbook*.<sup>165</sup> Shanghai attracted these newspapers because publications in the International Settlement enjoyed the extra-territorial privileges and a relative amount of freedom. They avoided the Chinese press censorship under the protection of the foreign governments in control.<sup>166</sup> However, it was the British, not the Americans that dominated Shanghai's publishing market for a long time. For example, the British owned *The North China Daily News*, which claimed to be the oldest and most

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<sup>164</sup> Sherman Kuang-jung Yin, "*The China Weekly Review*" (M.A. thesis, University of Missouri-Columbia, January 1962), 33.

<sup>165</sup> Quoted in Volz and Lee, "American Pragmatism and Chinese Modernization: Importing the Missouri Model of Journalism Education to Modern China," 4.

<sup>166</sup> Don D. Patterson, "The Journalism of China," in the *University of Missouri Bulletin* 23(34). 1922: 30-31.

influential newspaper in Shanghai.<sup>167</sup> The British also owned two Chinese-language publications, *Shun Pao* and *Sin Wan Pao*, which had the largest circulations in Shanghai.<sup>168</sup> Therefore, it was not easy to compete with an American opinion in such a British-dominated market. The American newspapermen had to produce fresh and unique products to compete with their British counterparts.

Millard's first attempt to establish a typical American paper, *The China Press*, was not very successful. Its major competitor, the British-owned *North China Daily News*, continuously condemned Millard's editorials. Eventually, Millard was forced to resign from the editorship in 1917.<sup>169</sup> Almost immediately after that, Millard started a second American paper, *The Millard's Review of the Far East* (later was changed into *The China Weekly Review*). This weekly journal followed Millard's philosophy when founding *The China Press*, which was independent, news-oriented, and using American layout style. Therefore, it was very important to learn about *The China Press* first in order to understand the editorial policy, readership, content design, and advertising of the *Review*. A comparison of the major differences between the American-owned *The China Press* and the British-owned *The North China Daily News* will explain why it was difficult to establish an American publication in Shanghai; and why Millard insisted on certain publishing policies.

These conclusions all relate closely to the editorial policies of the *Review*.

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid., p. 69; See too Volz and Lee, "American Pragmatism and Chinese Modernization: Importing the Missouri Model of Journalism Education to Modern China," 5.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>169</sup> Powell, *My Twenty-Five Years in China*, 10; Editorial, *The China Weekly Review*, July 30, 1930, cited in Lau, "University of Missouri and Journalism of China," 66-67.

Millard had a different motive for running a foreign newspaper than his British colleagues. Millard established *The China Press* to promote a closer relationship between the Chinese and American, according to Carl Crow.<sup>170</sup> The British, however, cared more about the commercial interests, and served mainly the British communities. Millard printed news not only about Shanghai or the foreigners who lived in China, but also about China's national news. He told the staff that they should try to cover the news about China in the same way that the big New York newspapers covered the news of the U.S.<sup>171</sup> Even though Millard did not carry out all of his ideal policies during his short-term editorship of *The China Press*, he carried them on to the *Review*, which influenced Powell's editorial policies afterwards. In contrast, the British showed no interest in covering local Chinese news. British newspapers published in China considered London as the news center of the world, and other parts of the British Empire came second. For the British, the next most important topic involved the interests of foreigners in China. The activities of the Chinese or events in China were important only if they affected the lives or interests of foreigners.<sup>172</sup> As a result, the British newspapers usually run advertisements on the front page, and contained only two main headlines in the inside page: LATEST TELEGRAPHIC INTELLIGENCE, and LOCAL AND GENERAL NEWS. Native

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<sup>170</sup> Carl Crow, *China Takes Her Place* (New York and London: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1944), 7.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

Chinese affairs were often left out as valueless news.<sup>173</sup>

Another difference between the British and American press was the American degree of independence. Traditionally, the British newspapers always took sides. After Williams visited the British media outlets, he said that the British newspapers were not free of party connections and other influences.<sup>174</sup> Millard, on the contrary, tried not to take sides with any warlord or colonists or countries in China. The U.S. was not involved in World War I until 1917. One way that Millard tried to enforce this policy was not to follow the leads provided by *Reuter's* news services or by the British press in general. As a result, the British officials in China accused Millard of being anti-British.<sup>175</sup>

Even though Millard's American style paper was well received by readers, the British did not want the paper to take away the market from their hands. Throughout years, *The China Press* faced three major dilemmas: British pressure, the shortage of news, and the financial dilemma of the paper, which eventually resulted in Millard's resignation from *The China Press*.

The British journalists in Shanghai in general predicted that the American way was doomed to fail. They argued that the Americans would never have enough stories to meet American mechanic standard: important news filled the front page

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>174</sup> Williams, "The World's Journalism," 6.

<sup>175</sup> Editorial, *The China Weekly Review*, Vol.53, No. 5, July 5, 1930, 169; Millard, *Our Eastern Question: America's Contact with the Asia and the Trend of Relations with China and Japan*, 202.

with individual headline for each story.<sup>176</sup> The British journalists were right.

American writer and journalist Carl Crow once said that the four hundred million Chinese people living in a vast and chaotic land should be able to provide enough story ideas for a four-page daily newspaper. However, reporters did not know the language or culture or easily find reliable or timely sources to write about these stories. He said:

In the provinces powerful officials accused wealthy men of imaginary crimes and impoverished them before setting them free. Fortunes were made and stolen in ever provincial capital, heads were chopped off, whole districts were wiped out by famines—enough of great human interest happened every day to fill the newspapers of the world, but we heard little of it—except in the form of obscure and unreliable rumors, and usually very stale rumors at that.<sup>177</sup>

Millard had trouble obtaining reliable news sources from the rest of China. The financial strait of the paper would only allow Millard to send correspondents to other cities occasionally. Besides a free German news report, the only accessible reports were from *Reuters'* agency, which Millard saw as British propaganda.<sup>178</sup>

Meanwhile, *The China Press* faced a financial dilemma. The British editors, such as O.M Green of *The North China Daily News*, did not favor the independence of *The China Press*, and had accused Millard's editorial of anti-British.<sup>179</sup> As a result, the British advertisers began boycotting *The China Press* by withdrawing their

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<sup>176</sup> Crow, *China Takes Her Place*, 3.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-7.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-6.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

patronage.<sup>180</sup> Due to the continuing financial pressure, Millard then resigned from *The China Press* in 1917.<sup>181</sup>

Millard diversified the traditionally British-dominated press environment by introducing an American style daily newspaper to the English-language readers in China. Even though Millard's first attempt in establishing an American newspaper in China did not succeed, his ambition did not end here. Millard immediately started his second publication, the *Review*.

### ***Overview of The China Weekly Review: an Independent American Journal in Shanghai***

After Millard's failed attempt with *The China Press*, he soon announced that he would establish a second American paper. Millard saw an increasing demand for an American newspaper in China, even though the American population was small then.<sup>182</sup> Considering financial ability and news accessibility, Millard planned to

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<sup>180</sup> Millard, *Our Eastern Question: America's Contact with the Asia and the Trend of Relations with China and Japan*, 202; Editorial, *China Weekly Review*, Vol.53, No. 5, July 5, 1930, 169.

<sup>181</sup> Millard, *Our Eastern Question: America's Contact with the Asia and the Trend of Relations with China and Japan*, 202-203.

Note: according to Millard, the *China Press* fell into the financial dilemma because it lost advertisements due to the First World War, neutral attitude of the paper, and the British advertisers' boycott. Millard did not follow the leads provided by Reuter's news services and by the British press in general, but gave both sides equally fair representation. The British therefore accused Millard of being anti-British, and cancelled the advertising contracts with the *China Press*. The increasing political influence and pressures on the British advertisers further caused Millard to lose more advertising. *The China Press* lost significant advertising revenue.

<sup>182</sup> Yin, "The *China Weekly Review*," 22.

Note: cited in Yin that according to the *Millard's Review*, Vol.2, No. 7 (October 13, 1917), p. 172. "According to the 1916 *China Year Book* there were 4,365 Americans in China in 1915 and to this number we are safe in adding at least 2,000 more that have come out in the last two years since the annual was published."

publish a weekly journal of opinions this time. In this way, he would assure that the journal would have enough articles and advertisements to fill in the pages every week. Moreover, Millard claimed to voice more American opinions in the Asia through this journal.<sup>183</sup> Millard's shift from a news-oriented daily newspaper to an opinioned weekly journal went well along with the American's increasing power and interests in Asia. As the Americans gradually entered the Chinese market after the Open Door Policy in the late nineteenth century, their journalists and politicians argued that Shanghai should have at least one American-owned and edited paper.

#### Editorial Policies of the *Review*:

Millard insisted on a liberal and independent editorial policy. When Powell asked Millard what they would print in the paper, Millard's first response was "Anything we damn please."<sup>184</sup> Powell later recalled in his autobiography that "Millard never modified his principles in the fundamentals of the Far Eastern situation as so many of his colleagues did for a quick profit."<sup>185</sup> Most influential foreign press were owned by the British interests and influenced by their partisan tradition. In fact, the majority of the Chinese publications were the organs of personal or group opinions.<sup>186</sup> An independent American journal would certainly diversify the

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<sup>183</sup> Peter Rand, "A Quixotic Adventure: The American Press in China, 1900-1950," in *Voice of China: The Interplay of Politics and Journalism*, ed. Chin-Chun Lee (New York: Guilford Press, 1990), 202-215.

<sup>184</sup> Powell, *My Twenty-Five Years in China*, 11.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>186</sup> Patterson, "The Journalism of China," 21.

voices in China.

The editorial policies of the *Review*, according to Powell, included “pro-Japanese, pro-Chinese, pro-Puppet, pro-English, and pro-American.”<sup>187</sup> It tended to advocate the Chinese Nationalist-American cooperation and American interests in China, supported China’s nationalistic aspirations, and opposed the Chinese Communists.<sup>188</sup> When Powell took over the journal in 1923, the Chinese Nationalist Party was rising as a new political power. The *Review*, at that time, wrote that the Chinese Nationalist Party would lead China to a bright future, and thus gave its hearty support to this new political force:

...there are many observers of the Chinese political situation who believe that the extension of the Kuomintang [Chinese Nationalist Party] may mean, in the end, improved conditions, the reasons for which are many...the most important one is that the Cantonese party [Chinese Nationalist Party rooted in Canton] has a program...There may not be agreement with the principles for which the Cantonese stand, but there must be an admission that they do have a program and are rapidly getting into a position to put it into effect.<sup>189</sup>

Powell said he supported the Chinese Nationalist Party mainly because he believed that it went along with American policies in China. A strong central Chinese government would prevent the U.S. from intervening with the internal political issues of China, and thus protected the American’s commercial interest in Asia.<sup>190</sup>

The *Review* also strongly condemned the Japanese aggressions and territorial

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<sup>187</sup> Powell, miscellaneous manuscripts, 1942-1947, F 139, JBPP, 3.

<sup>188</sup> Chen, “John B. Powell and China,” 32; O’Brien, *an American Editor in Early Revolutionary China: John William Powell and the China Weekly / Monthly Review*, 3.

<sup>189</sup> *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 38, No. 3, September 18, 1926, 59.

<sup>190</sup> Yin, “The China Weekly Review,” 62.

expansion since its first issue in 1917.<sup>191</sup> Especially after 1930, Powell was very concerned about the Japanese plan of swallowing China. As a result from 1932, Japanese attempted to confiscate the paper.<sup>192</sup> The Japanese also frequently banned the journal from circulation in the Japanese Empire.<sup>193</sup> After the Japanese occupied Shanghai, they also prevented the journal from reaching the U.S. on several occasions.<sup>194</sup> However, it was during this period that the *Review* earned a high reputation in Asia as well as in the world at large because of its provident editorials and fearless coverage concerning the Japanese.<sup>195</sup> Eventually, the Japanese sealed the paper when they attacked Shanghai on the morning of December 7, 1941.

#### Style and Content of the *Review*:

Millard insisted on applying the American-style layout to his second paper. Millard and Powell used as a model Herbert Croly's and Walter Lippmann's *New Republic*, which was then regarded typographically as the most attractive paper in America. Then later they used Oswald Garrison Villard's *The Nation*.<sup>196</sup> It seems that Millard and Powell wanted to differentiate their journal from the other British-owned

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<sup>191</sup> Chen, "John B. Powell and China," 32; O'Brien, *An American Editor in Early Revolutionary China: John William Powell and the China Weekly / Monthly Review*, 2.

<sup>192</sup> Yin, "The China Weekly Review," 66-69.

<sup>193</sup> Powell, miscellaneous manuscript, 1942-1947, F 139, JBPP, 1.

<sup>194</sup> *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 89, No. 4, June 24, 1939, 95.

<sup>195</sup> Yin, "The China Weekly Review," 73.

<sup>196</sup> Powell, *My Twenty-Five Years in China*, 14; O'Brien, *An American Editor in Early Revolutionary China: John William Powell and the China Weekly / Monthly Review*, 2.

English-language publications by any means, not just content, but by layout.

After conducting several readership analyses, Powell decided to include news reports and contributed articles dealing with political, commercial, and financial subjects that covered local, regional, and even international markets.<sup>197</sup> In the first issue, for example, the paper commented on the civil battles going on between the Chinese Communist and the Nationalist Parties, covered breaking news in Shanghai, and ran published articles about Japanese and American Far Eastern policies. Other contents included theater and books reviews, and advertisements. The content structure of the first issue was like this:

Editorial Paragraphs.....	T.F.M.	1
General Articles		
China's Commercial Call .....	Julean Arnold	5
Judge Lobingier's Decision.....		7
News Summary of the Week.....		10
Far Eastern Press Opinion.....		10
Men and Events.....		11
Women's Work.....		14
The Theatres.....	T.F.M.	15
Financial and Commercial.....		20
New Books and Publications		
Sir Ernest Satow's Treatise.....	G.W.M.	27 <sup>198</sup>

Millard and Powell highlighted particular journalistic values of the journal.

According to Edgar Snow, the *Review* had undertaken a consistent attempt to expose graft, corruption and oppression in Chinese politics. Since the journal was not submitted ahead of time to the Chinese and under the press laws due to its extra-territorial privileges, it appealed to many Chinese English-language readers,

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<sup>197</sup> Powell, *My Twenty-Five Years in China*, 14.

<sup>198</sup> *The China Weekly Review*, Vol.1, No.1, June 9, 1917, 1.

who looked for local Chinese news that could not be found in native Chinese papers.<sup>199</sup> Therefore, the largest readership of the *Review* ended up being not the foreigners in Shanghai, but younger Chinese generations. It also explained part of the reasons that the Japanese suppressed the journal in wartime due to its powerful influence among the Chinese audience.

#### The Readership of the *Review*:

According to Powell's research and observation, the *Review* had three possible groups of readers. The largest English-reading group was the younger Chinese generation made up of intellectuals, graduates, and undergraduates of missionary and municipal schools, who learned English as a second language and were interested in world affairs. They were eager to find out what American said about and planned to do with ongoing issues.<sup>200</sup> A second group of readers was thousands of foreign residents in Shanghai. The primary readers within this group consisted of Americans and British. Others included Scandinavians, French, Germans, Russians, Portuguese, Dutch, and a large population of Asian Jews. These foreigners could read English and were anxious to see an American-style paper containing news and editorial comments.<sup>201</sup> The last group of readers, in Powell's words, was "out-port" subscribers who were hunger for something to read while they lived far

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<sup>199</sup> Edgar Snow, letter to Wei-san Lau, September 2, 1948, cited in Lau, "University of Missouri and Journalism of China," 74-75.

<sup>200</sup> Powell, *My Twenty-Five Years in China*, 12-13.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

away in the inner lands, on some lonely islands or sailed on the sea. They dropped by Shanghai once in a while for business or transportation transition.<sup>202</sup>

The three groups of readership constituted a powerful public opinion group during the war. They were wealthy, well-educated, and had ties with foreign business and politics. They received editorial opinions from the *Review*, and shared these messages with peers their home countries. Thus, the Japanese military suppressed the *Review* partly because they wanted to hold back unfavorable editorials toward Japan that would create distrust among those influential readers.

The Finances of the *Review*:

Before Powell took over the editorship of the *Review*, he had been an advertising teacher and manager both in the U.S. and China. He understood that financial independence was an essential precondition for editorial independence. He said:

In nine cases out of ten the paper that deserves to be classed as ‘controlled’ is a weak paper financially. The paper that is strong and independent financially is likely to be independent in thought.<sup>203</sup>

However, it was very difficult for the foreign press to maintain financial independence in China. Patterson revealed that many foreign publications relied on both subscription fees from the foreign nationals, as well as the subsidies granted by politics or commercial interests.<sup>204</sup> For example, one of the leading English papers

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<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 13-14.

<sup>203</sup> John B. Powell, “Newspaper Efficiency in the Small Town,” in the *University of Missouri Bulletin*, 16 (11) (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri, April 1915), 3.

<sup>204</sup> Patterson, “The Journalism of China,” 69.

*The Peking Standard* was subsidized by the Japanese; the editor of *The Shanghai Times* was on the payroll of the Japanese;<sup>205</sup> *The Shanghai Evening Post Mercury* was taken over by the Japanese interests after 1941.<sup>206</sup> The Japanese also intended to buy the *Review*, but Powell rejected the offer.<sup>207</sup> In fact, it was very common for writers and publishers to receive influential subsidies through letters of introduction to Japanese corporations, dockyards and railways, requesting support in the form of advertisements and subscriptions.<sup>208</sup>

The *Review*, however, remained financially independent mainly by relying on the retail and advertising fees. According to Powell, an advance notice of the first issue that was mailed to prospective subscribers brought in more than one thousand subscriptions.<sup>209</sup> When the first issue was actually published, the circulation was 2,000, of which 300 copies went to paid subscribers. Three years later in 1920, this number grew to a roughly 6,000 paid subscribers and no more than 2,000 free copies for each issue, according to Powell.<sup>210</sup> This number alone indicated that the *Review* was popular among readers when the circulation of most foreign press in China did

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<sup>205</sup> Vernon McKenzie, "Many Employees of Chinese Papers Have their Homes in Plant," the *Editor and Publisher*, Vol. 62, No. 20, October 5, 1929, 56, cited in Lau, "University of Missouri and Journalism of China," 78.

<sup>206</sup> Powell, "Publishing in Shanghai," 74.

<sup>207</sup> Powell, *My Twenty-Five Years in China*, 340.

<sup>208</sup> J.A.J, "Japanese Subsidized Press in China," *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 42, No. 10, November 5, 1927, 242.

<sup>209</sup> Powell, *My Twenty-Five Years in China*, 14-15.

<sup>210</sup> *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 13, No.1, June 5, 1920, 6.

not exceed 5,000.<sup>211</sup>

The *Review* had a very high standard of publishing advertisements even though it had already been hard to maintain business without any subsidy from interests groups. The first issue said:

No advertising except that of reputable firms is accepted for publication in *Millard's Review*.

In case of misunderstandings resulting from statements made in advertisements subscribers will confer a favor by notifying *Millard's Review* at once.<sup>212</sup>

This policy set the *Review* apart from the other foreign press, most of which, according to Powell, “have not always been up to the high standards set by their own press at home.”<sup>213</sup> Those papers would print “advertisement of a vicious patent medicine, a fake financial scheme or certain class of pictures and illustrations that are degrading in their influence.”<sup>214</sup>

The *Review* was not the first American publication in Asia, but it became the longest standing American periodical in China. The journal recorded major events in China and offered an American interpretation of the Chinese and world affairs almost continuously from 1917 to 1953, except for the suspension between 1941 and 1945 during the second Sino-Japanese War.<sup>215</sup> Its founding editors, Millard and Powell, believed deeply in the freedom of the press and intended to introduce that concept

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<sup>211</sup> Patterson, “the Journalism of China,” 70.

<sup>212</sup> *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1, June 9, 1917, 12.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, No. 2, March 9, 1918, 40.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>215</sup> Parker and Parker, *Asian Journalism: a Selected Bibliography of Sources on Journalism in China and Southeast Asia*, 393.

into their journalism enterprises in China. They differentiated the journal from the British publication by covering local Chinese news, serving the Chinese public without any affiliation, subsidy or partition with local or foreign interest groups. Because of its consistent effort, *The Review* was considered as “one of the most noteworthy examples of an English-language access point to a period of Asian journalism.”<sup>216</sup> This journal will fit the purpose of studying an independent American publication in Shanghai very well.

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<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

### **CHAPTER THREE**

## **WARTIME PRESS IN SHANGHAI BECAME CASUALTY OF THE SINO-JAPANESE WAR**

On August 13, 1937, the Japanese attacked Shanghai after they occupied Peiping and Tientsin in North China. The Sino-Japanese conflict escalated into a full-scale war. “The Shanghai Incident”<sup>217</sup> reshaped the ranges of Chinese political powers and foreign colonists in China. Before this incident, the Japanese military had resided in northeast China by establishing an autonomous Manchukuo since 1931. The Chinese Nationalist Party capitalized in Nanking, east central China, while most Western powers, including the U.S., occupied the treaty ports near Shanghai and along the Yangtze River. However, after the Shanghai Incident, the Japanese began to expand their power from the north toward south China. The Japanese geographically reshaped the political domains, especially after they invaded in Nanking in 1937. Thereafter, the Chinese Nationalist Government had to abandon the capital and fled to Chungking, the southwest of China.

Shanghai became a very unique battlefield. Three different powers tangled with each other, competed, and then battled. On one side, the Chinese Nationalist

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<sup>217</sup> “Shanghai Incident”, in *The Japanese Monographs*, compiled by Military History Section Headquarters, Army Forces Far East; Distributed by Office of the Chief of Military History Department of the Army. (World War Two online Primary Resources: Pearl Harbor History Associates, Inc.:1945). Retrieved from <http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/monos/>, 28

Party confronted the Japanese army in the native Chinese city of Shanghai, but failed and retreated in November 1937. The Japanese military took over the Chinese part of Shanghai thereafter. On the other side, the foreign settlements isolated themselves from the battlefield, even as the city and industries fell. Foreign businesses, schools, press, and residential life in the foreign settlements and concessions remained relatively undisturbed. The foreign community was like an isolated island surrounded by the Japanese troops all around them. As the Japanese nibbled away at the territories in China and Asia-Pacific, they soon controlled Shanghai, and expelled all conflicting foreign powers out of China.

The competition among the wartime press reflects the conflicts and strengths of different powers in war. For example, early in the Sino-Japanese War, the press in North China was controlled mainly by the Japanese and Chinese militaries. The Shanghai International Settlement then remained a heaven for media professionals, because all businesses operating in the Settlement enjoyed extra-territorial privileges. However, as the Japanese gradually took over Shanghai, they also took over or destroyed the press in foreign settlements.

This chapter will focus on how the foreign publications in the Shanghai International Settlement became casualties of the Sino-Japanese War. It will interpret the phenomenon in the context of understanding the overall situation of the foreign press in wartime China, based upon the *Review*. It asks why a conflict between the Japanese military and the foreign press was inevitable; and how the military controlled the press in Shanghai step by step. It argues that: the military manipulates

the press, regardless of nationality, to serve the sole purpose of winning the war. The military controls over the press coincide with the military desire for more territories and privileges: the more severe the war becomes, the more the military attempts to control the press. The press in the battlefield, regardless of nationality or ownership, will all become a casualty of war.

### ***1937 Shanghai Incident: the Japanese Reshaped the Political Domain of China***

The second Sino-Japanese conflict started with what was called “the Manchurian Incident” in September 1931. The Japanese said the urgency to attain self-sufficiency in foodstuffs and raw materials motivated them to occupy Manchukuo.<sup>218</sup> The political system of Japan was gradually westernized after four major revolutions since the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>219</sup> Meanwhile, Japan leaped from an agricultural economy into a capitalistic and industrialized nation with the help of local cheap labor and Western financial aid. Japanese political westernization and economic boom pushed the army to look for more resources beyond their boundaries. As a result, the Japanese demanded more foreign markets and colonies to export surplus productions and to ensure a resource supply.<sup>220</sup> As Manchukuo could only

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<sup>218</sup> “China Incident,” *The Japanese Monographs*, 10.

Retrieved from

<http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/monos/144/144chap2.html#Primary%20Causes%20of%20China>

<sup>219</sup> Note: Shogun’s Revolution of 1868, the abolition of feudalism in 1871, the activation of national army in 1873 and the convocation of the parliament in 1889.

<sup>220</sup> Long-Hsuen Hus and Ming-kai Chang compiled. Trans. by Ha-Hsiung Wen, “Causes of the War,” in *History of the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945)*, (Taipei, Taiwan: Chung Wu Publishing Co.: 1972), 3

supply part of the demand, the Japanese army advanced into areas bordering Manchukuo, which contained a large amount of iron, coal, cotton, wool, and salt.<sup>221</sup>

According to Hus and Chang, the Chinese Nationalists, then the representative government of China, faced two major threats: the Japanese seizure of North China; the Russian invasion of the Chinese Eastern Railway and support of the Chinese Communists in South China.<sup>222</sup> The British and French powers, who formerly occupied central and southwestern China, were too busy with German threats in Europe to worry about China. The U.S. insisted on an isolation policy, and only cared about its economic interests in China.<sup>223</sup> China had few allies, and had to struggle alone.

Though the European and American powers tried to remain neutral, the Japanese considered the Western powers to be more supportive to the Chinese side. The former Japanese army and navy officers recounted in *The Japanese Monographs* that “Japan, Germany, and Italy, the ‘have-not’ nations, discontented with the status quo established by the Washington Conferences (1921-1922), devoted themselves to the task of rearmament, regarding the ‘have’ nations, Great Britain, U.S., France, and

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<sup>221</sup> “China Incident,” *The Japanese Monographs*, 10.

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<http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/monos/144/144chap2.html#Primary%20Causes%20of%20China>

<sup>222</sup> Hus and Chang, trans. Wen, “Causes of the War,” in *History of the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945)*, 1.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 4. “China Incident,” in *The Japanese Monographs*, 10.

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<http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/monos/144/144chap2.html#Primary%20Causes%20of%20China>

the Soviet Union as potential enemies.”<sup>224</sup> The Japanese also accused the Western powers of supporting China to intensify the anti-Japanese movement, which paved the way for the clash between Japan and China.<sup>225</sup> The Japanese occupation of Manchukuo and its great efforts of developing this region further caused the Western powers to suspect that Japan intended to swallow China.

A turning point in the Sino-Japanese conflict came in December of 1936. The Chinese Nationalist General Chang Hsueh-liang and Yang Hu-cheng kidnapped Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and forced him to cooperate with the Communist government to resist the Japanese. Thereafter, the Chinese Nationalists and Communists united as one major force to fight with the Japanese invading military.<sup>226</sup> Before 1937, three major powers dominated China: Japan occupied the northeastern China; the Chinese Nationalists and Communists merged as one with its major political influence in Nanking, central China; the Western powers and the U.S. isolated themselves from the Sino-Japanese conflict, but continued their business investments along the Yangtze River.

The Japanese attack on Peiping on July 7, 1937 marked the beginning of the full-scale war between China and Japan.<sup>227</sup> On July 29, the Japanese bombed Tientsin, one of China’s most important treaty ports near Peiping. By August 8, the Japanese troops fully occupied Peiping, and the Chinese army withdrew entirely from the

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<sup>225</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>226</sup> Paul K. T. Sih ed., “The Origins of the War,” in *Nationalist China during the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945* (Hicksville, New York: Exposition Press, 1977), 17.

<sup>227</sup> Preface to Hus and Chang, trans. Wen, *History of the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945)*, i.

city.<sup>228</sup> The Japanese army moved steadily toward central China, where the Chinese Nationalists maintained their power.

On August 13, the Japanese attacked Shanghai, site of major Western economic interests in China.<sup>229</sup> According to reporter Percy Finch, a large part of the International Settlement was now involved in the hostilities for the first time. Seventy percent of the city's industrial potential was gone. Six hundred thousand people in Shanghai and the adjacent industrial zone were out of work. More than U.S. \$800 million in foreign investment was lost in the country. China's economic revival, which had centered in Shanghai and had appeared so promising at the beginning of 1937, was stopped by the war.<sup>230</sup>

Four months later on December 12, the Japanese bombed and sank the American gunboat "Panay" in the Lower Yangtze River near Nanking. Finch said that the incident was considered as one of the early signs of the Japanese threat to the U.S. The Americans in Shanghai began to alert their government of about Japanese ambitions in Asia.<sup>231</sup> One day later on December 13, Japanese troops entered Nanking, the capital of the Chinese Nationalist Party. Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek abandoned Nanking, and then left Hankow in 1938, and moved China's capital to

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<sup>228</sup> "Japanese Occupy Peiping, Bomb Tientsin City, Destroy Many Chinese Cultural Institutions," in *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 81, No. 10, August 7, 1937, 350-351.

<sup>229</sup> "China Incident," in *The Japanese Monographs*, 15.  
Retrieved from  
<http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/monos/144/144chap2.html#Primary%20Causes%20of%20China>

<sup>230</sup> Percy Finch, *Shanghai and Beyond* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), 258.

<sup>231</sup> "Bombing of Anglo-American Ships and Future U.S. Policy," *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 83, No. 3, December 18, 1937, 59- 60.

Chungking, a southwestern mountain city.<sup>232</sup>

The 1937 Shanghai Incident broke the political balance of China. Before this incident, the Japanese mainly controlled China's north, while the Chinese Nationalist Party controlled central China. After this incident, the Japanese reinforced its military presence in central China and along the Yangtze River, whereas the Chinese Nationalist Party had to withdraw to China's inner lands [See Appendix, Map 1]. By then, the Japanese dominated China's most prosperous and developed regions in the northeastern, north and central China, which provided plenty of resources and markets for the Japanese booming economy. In contrast, Russia, Great Britain, France, and the U.S., who used to profit from those markets had to subordinate their economic interests to Japanese military aggression. As the Sino-Japanese War escalated, the Japanese would demand more territories and privileges from the Chinese parties as well as from the foreign powers in China.

As Lin Yu-tang pointed out, "no nation can be conquered unless its press is first suppressed into silence."<sup>233</sup> This was especially true with Japanese overrunning each Chinese city, and taking as its first victim, the Chinese press. After the Japanese oppressed the foreign concessions in those cities, the foreign-owned publications came next. As a result, many independent publications of the third party interest abandoned their neutrality and stopped printing under the Japanese pressure.

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<sup>232</sup> "China Incident," in *The Japanese Monographs*, 15; Retrieved from <http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/monos/144/144chap2.html#Primary%20Causes%20of%20China>; Finch, *Shanghai and Beyond*, 258.

<sup>233</sup> "Wholesale Suspension of Chinese Newspapers Follows Extension of Japanese Rule," in *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 83, No. 1, December 4, 1937, 2,

In Peiping, the Japanese eradicated the independent or pro-Nanking press. For example, the Japanese suppressed the entire leading Chinese newspapers, such as the *Peiping Morning Post*, the *North China Press*, and the *World Daily News*. Only the Japanese-owned or pro-Japanese newspapers survived. The British-owned *Peiping Chronicle* finally abandoned its fair news policy in November 1937. The *Peiping News*, a pro-Nanking English-language newspaper, was suspended after the Chinese army withdrew from Peiping. Its editor, Wilson Wei, was arrested as a Communist and detained for several weeks. Another casualty among Peiping periodicals was the *Democracy*, sponsored and published by a group of leading Chinese and foreign educators, writers, and publicists, including Edgar Snow, Ida Pruitt, and Nym Wales.<sup>234</sup>

In Tientsin, the Japanese ceased the newspapers immediately after they bombed the city. The newspapers published in the foreign concessions were stopped, too.<sup>235</sup> They either were suspended or moved to other places to continue businesses. Two out of three foreign-owned publications in Tientsin stayed operational: one was the American-owned *North China Star*, which was very sympathetic to the Japanese; and the other was the British-owned *Peiping-Tientsin Times*, which always gave equal prominence to the Chinese as well as the Japanese news available.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

Note: Some newspapers, the *Commercial Daily News* or *Shang Pao* for example, were forced to cease publication immediately after the Japanese bombing of Tientsin on July 29<sup>th</sup>, 1937. Some others, such as the *Central News*, and the *Social Welfare (Yi Shih Pao)* continued to struggle for existence but could not overcome the handicap of the Japanese terrorism. Other leading newspapers, such as the famous *L'Impartial* or *Ta Kung Pao* moved to Shanghai.

<sup>236</sup> Leong, "The Effects of Censorship and Japanese Pressure on the Chinese and Foreign Press in

The military controls over the Shanghai press were rather complex. First of all, Shanghai hosted more newspapers, both Chinese and foreign-owned, than any other city in China then. According to a list of foreign publications compiled in 1935, there were eleven foreign dailies in Shanghai. The number was almost three times larger than that of Peiping and Tientsin combined.<sup>237</sup> (See Table 1, and Appendix, Map 2)

Table 1: Selected foreign publications in Shanghai in 1935<sup>238</sup>

Name of Publication	Ownership Nationality
<i>North China News</i> (Daily)	British
<i>North China Herald</i> (Weekly edition of the <i>North China News</i> )	British
<i>Shanghai Times</i> (Daily)	British
<i>Shanghai Sunday Times</i> (Weekly)	British
<i>Finance &amp; Commerce</i> (Weekly)	British
<i>British Chamber of Commerce Journal</i> (Monthly)	British
<i>China Journal of Science and Arts</i> (Monthly)	British
<i>Oriental Affairs</i> (Monthly)	British
<i>Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury</i> (Daily)	American

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China,” 93-94; See too “Wholesale Suspension of Chinese Newspapers Follows Extension of Japanese Rule,” in *The China Weekly Review*, 3.

<sup>237</sup> Leong, “Effects of Censorship and Japanese Pressure on Press in China,” 93.

<sup>238</sup> H.G.W. Woodhead (Eds). *The China Year Book, 1935*, 591; See too, Leong, “Effects of Censorship and Japanese Pressure on Press in China,” 93.

<i>Capital and Trade</i> (Weekly)	American
<i>Far Eastern Review</i> (Monthly)	American
<i>Ta Mei Wan Pao</i> (Daily)	American
<i>China Weekly Review</i> (Weekly)	American
<i>China Press</i> (Daily)	American
<i>Le Journal de Shanghai</i> (Daily)	French
<i>Deutsche Shanghai Zeitung</i>	German
<i>Shanghai Mainichi Shimbun</i>	Japanese
<i>Shanghai Nichi Nichi Shimbun</i>	Japanese
<i>Shanghai Nipo</i>	Japanese
<i>Slovo Zaria</i>	White Russian
<i>Kopeika</i>	White Russian

Shanghai, the business and publishing center of China in the early twentieth century, was also home to three municipal powers. As was mentioned before, Shanghai consisted of the Chinese city or the “Native City”, the French Concession, and the International Settlement.<sup>239</sup> The foreign settlements as unique products of semi-colonialism were geographic areas set aside by an agreement between the foreign consuls and the local Chinese officials within which foreigners may rent land from the Chinese owner. The foreigners paid an annual ground rent to the Chinese government, and registered title deeds both in their own consulates and with in the proper Chinese authorities. The settlements maintained their own police forces,

<sup>239</sup> Powell, *My 25 Years in China*, F 69, JBPP, 3.

conducted public utilities and collected revenue. The police forces and troops of different countries stationed in the settlements to protect foreign lives and properties.<sup>240</sup>

As early as 1854, the British and American settlements merged as one single International Settlement. A Municipal Council was created to protect the Western interests within the borders of the Settlement.<sup>241</sup> The Council, a highly self-governed organ, was independent of the Chinese government,<sup>242</sup> and enjoyed a high degree of extra-territoriality. The Chinese military was not allowed into the concessions; and the Chinese courts had no jurisdiction over foreign nationals there.<sup>243</sup> Foreign taxpayers elected the council board members, who represented the interests of only four to five percent of the total foreign population.<sup>244</sup> The Settlement maintained its own army and navy in Shanghai Volunteer Corp, and police reserved its own forces, which were under direct command of the Chairman of the Council.<sup>245</sup> The Council always prioritized the commercial and financial interests. This philosophy determined the council's approaches to municipal problems, including its reactions to the Japanese

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<sup>240</sup> Johnstone, *The Shanghai Problem*, 100.

<sup>241</sup> Ching-lin Hsia, *The Status of Shanghai: a Historical Review of the International Settlement* (Shanghai, Hong Kong and Singapore: Kelly and Walsh Limited, 1929), 16.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, 132-133.

<sup>243</sup> Rudolf Wagner, "The Role of the Foreign Community in the Chinese Public Sphere," *China Quarterly*, 142 (1995): 431.

<sup>244</sup> Hsia, *The Status of Shanghai*, 127.

<sup>245</sup> Thomas Millard, *China, Where It is Today and Why* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and company, 1928), 264.

demand of suppressing newspapers in the Settlement.<sup>246</sup>

In the beginning, the Japanese did not suppress the press in the settlement directly, but rather through the Municipal Council. The Japanese only targeted anti-Japanese reports that were composed mainly by the Chinese press. The Japanese then asked the Council to carry out *The Five Requests* that aimed to crack down any anti-Japanese activity and organization:

- 1— Suppression of anti-Japanese and other subversive activities:
  - (a) Disbandment of all organizations, including KMT branches.
  - (b) Suppression of posting of bills and dissemination of literature; prohibition of theatricals, motion-pictures, etc.
  - (c) Suppression of radio broadcasts.
  - (d) Suppression of the Chinese “spy” mania and “traitor” hunting.
- 2— Eviction of Chinese Governmental organs and their representatives, both central and local; effective supervision over the activities of Chinese governmental and party leaders.
- 3— Prohibition of Chinese censorship of communications, both postal and telegraphic.
- 4— Suppression of Chinese censorship of the Chinese press and news services.
- 5— Suppression of unauthorized wireless communication by the Chinese.<sup>247</sup>

The Council agreed to carry out “insofar as it was possible” for them to satisfy the Japanese requests. As early as December 1937, the Council warned all Chinese newspapers that anti-Japanese activities would not be allowed in the settlement.<sup>248</sup>

The Municipal Police also sent out “unofficial advice” to six Chinese newspapers and

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<sup>246</sup> William Crane Johnstone, Jr, “The International Settlement” in the *Shanghai Problem* (Stanford University, California: Stanford University Press; London, Humphrey Milford: Oxford University Press, 1937), 62-63.

<sup>247</sup> “Japanese to Take Over Chinese Administrative Functions in Shanghai?” *The China Weekly Review*, Vd. 82, No.13, November 27, 1937, 300.

<sup>248</sup> “Wholesale Suspension of Chinese Newspapers Follows Extension of Japanese Rule,” *The China Weekly Review*, 4.

agencies to tone down their patriotic ardor or discontinue publications in the settlement.<sup>249</sup> As a result, other news agencies and newspapers ceased to publish articles that urge resistance to the Japanese invasion. Instead, they reported on harmless subjects, such as refugee aid. Meanwhile, the Japanese had already controlled the native Chinese city of Shanghai bordering the foreign settlements. The Japanese threatened, kidnapped, and murdered journalists, and randomly seized newspapers that were placed in the mails. The Japanese also started a propaganda campaign by imitating famous Chinese newspapers. For example, a daily newspaper called the *New Shun Pao* was an imitation of *Shun Pao*, which was loaded with Japanese propaganda in Chinese. Japanese airplanes distributed thousands of such papers throughout the countryside.<sup>250</sup>

Generally speaking, the Shanghai press in 1937 was relatively undisturbed, compared with those in Peiping and Tientsin during the same period. Major influential Chinese newspapers, such as the “big three”: *Ta Gong Pao*, *Shun Pao*, and *Sin Wen Pao*, did not receive “unofficial advice”. Foreign-owned English-language publications were not yet on the Japanese attacking agenda. The American-owned *Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury* did not cease publication or move elsewhere. *The China Press* and The

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<sup>249</sup> Ibid., 2.

Note: These papers were: The *Central News Agency*, official news dissemination organization. *Min Pao*, the organ of the Chinese Nationalist Party; *China Times*, a some thirty-year-old newspaper; *Lih Pao*, a popular tabloid which summarized the important political and social news at a very low price; The *China National Herald*, and the *Central China Daily News*.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid., 4.

foreign-owned publications came next, continued publishing on a regular basis.<sup>251</sup>

***1938 Shanghai: Japanese Postal Censorship and Propaganda Pervaded in Previously Chinese-controlled Areas of Shanghai***

After the Japanese defeated Chinese troops in Peiping, Tientsin, Shanghai, and Nanking, the first round Sino-Japanese contest paused for a short while in January 1938. According to the Japanese military document, *Fundamental Policy to deal with the China Incident*, the Japanese demanded more political, military, and economic rights from the Chinese Central Government. To be specific, some major terms included: China officially recognized Manchukuo as an independent region; China would abandon anti-Japanese or anti-Manchukuo policies; China would allow Japan to garrison military for a specific time period in certain parts of North China, Central China, and Inner Mongolia; Japan, Manchukuo and China would agree and cooperate on such matters as the development of resources, customs duties, trade, aviation, transportation and communications; and Japan and China should jointly govern some economic regions, such as the Greater Shanghai. If the Central Government rejected those agreements, the Japanese would plan to create a new cooperative Chinese regime. Moreover, the document said that “the Empire will then endeavor either to destroy the existing central government of China or else to induce it to join the new

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<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

central regime.”<sup>252</sup> The Central Government refused to accept these terms. In 1940, the Japanese created a puppet Chinese government headed by Wang Ching-wei in Nanking. Thereafter, the Japanese had its legal representative in China to carry out many Japanese orders.

As explanation in 1938, the Japanese had not yet become the legal ruler of the entire Shanghai. This political dilemma restrained Japan from controlling the press in Shanghai. Though the Japanese had occupied the Chinese native city of Shanghai since November 1937, they had no direct routes or authority to suppress those patriotic Chinese publications and independent foreign press that registered in the International Settlement. During this period, the Japanese controls over the press remained rather indirect and mild. Instead, the Japanese used two significant methods in Shanghai: postal censorship and propaganda. These tactics also reflected the Japanese plans in this period: in terms of military control, they reinforced areas that they were occupied and encircled the unoccupied areas; in terms of ideology control, they tried to justify the war and win public support by having the world understand the Japanese motive of “bringing New Order to Asia”.

The Japanese censorship in 1938 was limited primarily to postal censorship. The Japanese could not directly censor the press published in the Settlement, so they restricted the mailing service between the Settlement and the rest of Shanghai, China, and even the world by directly monitoring the Chinese Postal Offices. After the Japanese warned several Chinese newspapers in the Settlement through the “advice”

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<sup>252</sup> Appendix 11, *The Japanese Monograph*. Retrieved from <http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/monos/144/144app11.html>

of the Municipal Council, they began to interfere with the delivery and circulation of the foreign-owned publications in the Settlement.

Beginning in January 1938, the Japanese censors who were stationed in the foreign cable companies delayed and prevented foreign correspondents from sending messages to newspapers abroad. For example, the Japanese accused Victor Keen, correspondent for the *New York Herald–Tribune* of sending a message that contained Japanese military information in Hangchow, and forced him to withdraw the cable. Another correspondent, H. J. Timperley for the *Manchester Guardian*, could not send his cable because the Japanese said Timperley’s report, which contained information that the Japanese militarists slaughtered some 300,000 Chinese civilians following their occupation of Nanking, “was likely to harm the military.”<sup>253</sup> The Japanese military also urged the correspondents to delete certain portions of their messages before sending them out. Otherwise, the Japanese said they would do whatever they liked with the messages without further informing those journalists of what happened to their dispatches.<sup>254</sup>

Following the suppression of Timperley’s first message describing Japanese military atrocities, Timperley referred the matter to the British Council authorities, who made it a subject of official protest to the Japanese Government. Timperley then filed another message at the Cable Office, also referring to atrocities done by the Japanese soldiers. It included a portion of the editorial on the subject, which had

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<sup>253</sup> “Japanese Censor Holds Up All Reports of Atrocities,” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 83, No. 8, January 22, 1938, 199.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

appeared in the *North China Daily News*. The Japanese suppressed this message again because they regarded the statement in the British newspaper “was grossly exaggerated, malicious, unsubstantiated and tending to besmirch the good name of the Japanese troops.”<sup>255</sup> The protest of the British Council failed. It probably signaled that the Japanese had begun to challenge the British power, which used to dominate the International Settlement.

The Japanese censorship began triggering off a series of protests from the international community in the Settlement. Many questioned the Japanese legality of establishing censors and a censorship system in a non-Japanese controlled area. The *Review* published several editorials, in which the *Review* made it very clear that the Japanese action of stationing censors in the foreign cable offices was illegal. First of all, the building, where the Japanese censors were stationed, was a foreign-owned property by the American, British, and, Denmark. The Japanese did not get the official permission to operate the station from the diplomatic authorities of the three countries. Too, the Japanese had no right to issue censorship in the International Settlement. Japan had not yet become the official government of the Shanghai area, much less of the International Settlement.<sup>256</sup> The *Review* published an article, and said the Japanese censorship was illegal, because “the Chinese authorities who controlled the censorship previously represented the recognized government of the country, whereas the Japanese, although in military control, have been careful to disavow any intention

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<sup>255</sup> “Guardian Corroborates Illegality of Japanese Censorship,” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 83, No. 9, January 29, 1938, 228.

<sup>256</sup> “Japanese Censor Holds Up All Reports of Atrocities,” 199.

of permanent territorial occupation.”<sup>257</sup>

Since the censorship had raised a storm of protests, the Japanese reinforced their controls over the press. Terrorist attacks began in February 1938. According to a report in the *Review*, Chinese journalists were murdered in the streets. Several news staff from both Chinese and foreign-registered newspapers received threatening letters, warning them to stop writing anything “anti-Japanese”. Two Chinese-language newspapers, both published by the foreigners, were bombed. Two others registered with American authorities received threatening letters. Though the Settlement policemen offered rewards and provided large police force to put things back into order, the terrorism never stopped. Between January and early February, the French police alone had made 6,000 arrests and seized 182 Mauser and other type of pistols in their campaign against terrorism. Though the *Review* did not attribute who were the terrorists, it indicated that those activities were to attack any “anti-Japanese” newspapers and newsmen.<sup>258</sup> The Japanese would be the primary suspects.

In early March, the Japanese embassy revealed a plan of establishing censors in the Central Postal Office in Shanghai. Every piece of mail, no matter whether they were personal letters or commercial messages, would be examined by the Japanese censors before the letters arrived or left Shanghai. International letters from the U.S. and other countries were also included.<sup>259</sup> One incident regarding a message from

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<sup>257</sup> “Guardian Corroborates Illegality of Japanese Censorship,” 228

<sup>258</sup> “Heads Fall, Grenades Explode as Terrorists Attack Newspapers,” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 83, No. 12, February 19, 1938, 320-321.

<sup>259</sup> “Postal Censorship Should Not Be Permitted,” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 84, No. 1, March 5, 1938, 1-2.

Shanghai office to Tsingtao office possibly showed how the Japanese censorship worked: On July 7, “Briton, Jock Crichton, stopped by Japanese sentry for smoking cigarette [on] Commercial Wharf this morning. Crichton extinguished cigarette and apologized, where upon sentry slapped his face.” When the Tsingtao office received the telegram, it changed into “...where upon sentry let him go.”<sup>260</sup> This step was very similar to what the Japanese did in Peiping and Tientsin: the Japanese opened and read letters, or even threw unread letters away as they had no time to read all of them. Some foreign individuals were not permitted to receive any mail or even copies of Shanghai newspapers for which they subscribed. *The Review* commented that spying into commercial and personal mails of foreigners would greatly interfere with foreigners’ businesses and personal lives.<sup>261</sup>

In addition, the Japanese postal censorship gradually affected the circulations and subscriptions of newspapers. The delay in delivery began to cause newspapers to lose subscriptions. For example, due to the Japanese censorship, mailing a letter from Shanghai to Peiping now took about three weeks whereas it used to take 30 hours by train or from six to eight hours by airplane. *The Review* attributed the delay to two major reasons: the Japanese censorship in post offices, and the intervention of the Imperial Japanese Forces which had disrupted railway, air communication, and postal

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<sup>260</sup> “Reuters Hard Hit by Japanese Censors,” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 86, No. 7, October 15, 1938, 234

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*

services all over China.<sup>262</sup> Some subscribers of the *Review* began to cancel their subscriptions as they did not receive the paper in time and would not renew the contract for next year.<sup>263</sup>

Several months later, the negative consequences of stationing Japanese censors in Chinese Postal Office in early March grew worse. The Japanese censorship in the local head and branch post offices became so serious that normal mail service practically ceased to exist. No foreign firms in Shanghai used the post office for important mail. They either used the foreign postal agencies or asked people to carry the messages to the destinations. Individual mailings could take months to arrive, whereas it used to take only a few days. This situation greatly hurt the newspaper industry in Shanghai, as more and more subscribers in Peiping, Tientsin, and other North China cities complained of not receiving the papers at all or not on time. According to the *Review*, complaints of newspapermen in Shanghai about censorship damage to their businesses would fill a column: “parcels of papers sent to dealers in Tientsin and Peiping have half the copies abstracted. In some cases pages or sections have been torn out.”<sup>264</sup>

However, no foreign consular or diplomat filed any formal complaint against the Japanese censorship in the Chinese Postal Office. As a result, the Japanese

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<sup>262</sup> “Why General Terauchi Failed to Receive His Paper,” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 84, No. 6, April 9, 1938, 145.

<sup>263</sup> “Why Another Japanese Subscriber Didn’t Receive the Paper?” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 84, No. 8, April 23, 1938, 205.

<sup>264</sup> “Japanese Interference with the Mail at Shanghai,” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 85, No. 6, July 9, 1938, 181-182.

extended their postal espionage into commercial messages. They inspected the mail of commercial firms in order to supply Japanese firms with vital information about their competitors' sources of supplies for native goods or services.

Shanghai was an information hub, through which a large amount of publications was sent out to world audience and fairly large number of foreign publications flew in. The Japanese censorship paralyzed not only communication between Shanghai and other cities in China, but also the news flow between Shanghai and other parts of the world. Foreign news agencies in Shanghai encountered a hard time to communicate important news stories with outside world. For example, the Japanese censors deterred the *Reuters* Shanghai office from receiving certain telegrams from its London office. The *Reuters* was able to receive texts of these telegrams only through transactions of its Hong Kong office. Most of the banned messages were about the battles between the Chinese and the Japanese. The Japanese censors also interfered with mails from the outside world which were addressed to subscribers residing in Shanghai and elsewhere in China. For example, several hundred copies of the *Readers Digest* containing a reprinted article of Pearl Buck's were confiscated in August 1938. The article said China would win the war.<sup>265</sup>

Generally speaking, the postal censorship in 1938 affected Shanghai

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<sup>265</sup> "Interference with the Mail in the Shanghai Post Office," *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 89, No. 4, June 24, 1939, 95.

Note: Pearl S. Buck, an American writer who grew up in China and spent almost her first 30 years in China since 1900. She won a Pulitzer Prize in 1935 for the book *The Good Earth*; she was also the first American woman to win a Nobel Prize in Literature in 1938, according to a brief bibliography of her on the website of the University of Pennsylvania. Retrieved from <http://www.english.upenn.edu/Projects/Buck/biography.html>

newspapers' circulations and subscriptions. Restraints on outside mailings to Shanghai also limited reliable news sources that were available to the press. However, the censorship in Shanghai was rather gentle, comparing to the situation in North China, where the Japanese censored literature, suppressed press, and revised the curriculum in colleges.<sup>266</sup> In North China, the Japanese also published a Japanese Press Law book. Three major sets of regulations (fifty in total) strictly restrained any printing of war plans, Japanese loss, and any negative reporting about Japanese troops, national image, and the war. The violators would face non-violent penalty, such as suppression, imprisonment, suspension, and violent punishment, such as assassination, blackmail, and kidnapping.<sup>267</sup> While leading English newspapers in Peiping and Tientsin areas had been either suspended or bought out by the Japanese, the majority of foreign newspapers in Shanghai maintained independence. However, the Japanese postal censorship in Shanghai was just the beginning of overall control of the press. In fact, those methods which were once popular in the North China were soon transferred to Shanghai.

Meanwhile, after what was called "the Rape of Nanking" in December 1937, Japan began spending large amount of money on propaganda to promote a positive image of Japan and its "New Order" in Asia. They propagandized in such a wide area that the Institute of Propaganda Analysis described Japan's propaganda as "the biggest,

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<sup>266</sup> "Japan's 'Thought Control' in North China," *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 84, No. 12, May 21, 1938, 346-347.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

the most impressive and by far the most expensive of any foreign power.”<sup>268</sup> The official propaganda included sending “good will” missions back and forth, pavilions at two world’s fairs, and the dissemination of literature on cultural, economic, educational, and other “harmless” subjects. Unofficial propaganda was executed by the secretly paid agents who spread malicious, scandalous reports on Chinese officials.<sup>269</sup>

Besides “educating” the people in China, the Japanese also tried hard to make the overseas audience “understand the true motive of Japan to bring peace to Asia.” The Japanese paid 10 foreign “observers” in Shanghai to write supportive articles. For example, the Japanese army and navy took those people on a daily excursion to points of interest around Shanghai. They then asked the foreigners to recall a grand tour of the Yangtze River. The aim was to show the world audience the Japanese efforts of developing the Greater Shanghai, and their hospitality toward the foreigner. In addition, the Japanese also paid great deal of money to cameramen of the *Times*, *Life* and *Fortune* to shoot nicely-portrayed newsreels, movies, and “stills”. In addition, the Japanese invited foreign correspondents to visit Japan with all expenses covered. For example, Alexander Sharton, representative of the *New York Journal of Commerce* spent several days touring Japan, Manchukuo and North China, following which he gave an interview in which he supported the Japanese program, mentioning

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<sup>268</sup> As cited in Tong, *China and the World Press*, 79.

<sup>269</sup> Maurice E. Votaw, “*Report on Japanese Propaganda in the U.S.*”. F 11, C 3672 Maurice E. Votaw Papers, Literary Productions, 1939-June 1939 (Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri, Columbia).

incidentally, that he was shortly issuing a “special supplement on Manchukuo.”<sup>270</sup>

In conclusion, the Japanese controls over Shanghai press had just begun in 1938. Though the degree of control was not as severe as that in occupied North China, all possible methods, including censorship, propaganda, and terrorism, had existed in embryonic form. After defeating the Chinese press in the native Shanghai city, the Japanese began to attempt to suppress newspapers in the International Settlement, firstly the foreign-owned Chinese press, and then the foreign-owned English press. In 1938, the Japanese were not strong enough to challenge the Municipal Council in Shanghai. The Japanese probably did not want to annoy the Western powers at such an early stage of the war as Japan itself had just entered China’s central region and headed toward south. As the Japanese power grew in China and Asia-Pacific at large, the foreign publications in the settlement would face a direct press battle against the Japanese military.

### ***1939 Shanghai International Settlement: the Japanese Approached Independent Foreign Publications***

The majority of Japanese power was restrained to the Chinese city of Shanghai in 1938. The Japanese had no legality or authority to manipulate the other two foreign settlements which were still isolated as “cities within a city”. As the Japanese power encircled and expanded into the International Settlement of Shanghai and elsewhere in China, the Japanese were no longer satisfied with soft control methods, such as

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<sup>270</sup> “Japan Spends Millions to Make the World ‘Understand’,” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 86, No. 7, October 15, 1938, 219.

postal censorship and propaganda, but rather began more severe suppressions on the Chinese as well as the foreign press. In 1939, the Japanese justified its authority in the foreign settlements through Shanghai Municipal Council, promoting anti-Westerners propaganda, and continued postal censorship and terroristic attacks on newspapers.

In order to popularize the “New Order”, the Japanese military had to destroy the old order, and wipe all conflicting interests out of China. Japanese controls over the press embodied a similar military strategy: to replace confronting Chinese and foreign press in China with pro-Japanese publications. In 1939, the Japanese openly attacked the Chinese journalists and publications in the Settlement. They then shifted their focus toward the foreign press and journalists, and started with an anti-British propaganda campaign.

Since late 1938, the Japanese in Tientsin and Hankow began to disrupt the social orders in the foreign settlements in the name of controlling anti-Japanese activities in those areas. According to the *Review*, “the retrocession of these areas will mean the dissolution of the Municipal Councils, the recall of the foreign troops, the abandonment of bases for the development of foreign trade in China, and the placing of huge foreign property and investment under Japanese restrictions and controls.”<sup>271</sup> Destroying the old orders was just the first step. The next step was to establish Japanese authority in the foreign settlements, so that the Japanese now could govern not only the Chinese native cities, but also formerly foreign-dominated areas. The

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<sup>271</sup> Francis C. B. Chang, “Japanese Plan to Abolish Foreign Concessions in China,” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 87, No. 6, January 7, 1939, 178. The original piece was written in Hong Kong on December 26, 1938.

increasing conflict between Japanese military invasion and the Western commercial interests in China gradually convinced the foreigners that a war between the East and the West was inevitable. Such conflicts were about to mount in Shanghai, where most Westerners resided. Within almost three years, Great Britain and the U.S. would easily get into a foreign war because of their encounters with Japan in Asia.

Japanese methods of pressuring the foreign settlements in North China soon came down to Shanghai. In 1938, the Japanese had asked the Shanghai Municipal Council to warn anti-Japanese Chinese newspapers in the settlement. At the beginning of 1939, the Japanese consul-general in Shanghai protested to American and British consuls as well as to the Municipal Council against all alleged anti-Japanese publications.<sup>272</sup> The Municipal Council by then had lost its neutrality, and helped the Japanese crack down on anti-Japanese activities and allowed Japanese propaganda to boom in the Settlement. At first, the Shanghai Municipal Council may have only done so to avoid any direct conflict with the Japanese and to preserve a peaceful community as it was before the war. But later, the more the Council appeased, the more aggressive the Japanese became. Once the Japanese wiped out the Chinese resistant forces, they would target the foreign businesses, and eventually ruin Western commercial interests in Shanghai.

By April, the American *United Press* was the only neutral news source in Shanghai, which was then published in the *China Press* and *North-China Daily News*.

According to the *Review*, even the British *Reuters* service, once independent, was

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<sup>272</sup> Ting, *Government Control of the Press in Modern China: 1900-1949* (Cambridge: East Asian Research Center Harvard University, 1974), 128.

then subject to a certain measure of official control as it received financial support from the government sources.<sup>273</sup> The British Council in Shanghai was the first foreign power to regulate the publications in the Japanese way. On April 22, the British consulate-general prohibited British-owned newspapers that may have encouraged anti-Japanese sentiments or terrorist activities, including the texts of and comments on all documents and declarations issued by the Chinese Nationalist Party. Any reference to Chinese collaborators as “Chinese traitors,” Chinese soldiers as “the brave fighters,” and the Japanese as “the enemy,” “the devil”, or “XX” were banded.<sup>274</sup> The *Review* published an editorial on the same day, calling upon the leaders in American and British communities to oppose Japanese controls of the Chinese newspapers that were publishing in the International Settlement. The *Review* argued that the Japanese would stifle all other independent foreign newspapers in the Settlement, after they controlled the Chinese newspapers; the foreign community should take immediate actions. Otherwise, the International Settlement would sooner or later lose its independent publishing environment.<sup>275</sup>

However, the Council did not agree with the *Review*'s comments. The Council continued to pressure the press. On May 6, the Settlement's captain-superintendent of police warned all newspapers not to publish without prior police permission, because recounts of speeches or documents on the war situation or

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<sup>273</sup> “The Consular Authorities and the Japanese Drive against Press-Freedom,” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 88, No. 8, April 22, 1939, 223-224.

<sup>274</sup> Ting, *Government Control of the Press in Modern China 1900- 1949*, 128.

<sup>275</sup> “The Consular Authorities and the Japanese Drive against Press-Freedom,” *The China Weekly Review*, 223-224.

reports on political activities tended to incite violence. Newsmen were threatened to lose their licenses if they did not comply.<sup>276</sup> On May 9, the Japanese presented the Municipal Council with a blacklist, and demanded the Council suppress a number of newspapers and arrest some journalists. Many journalists also received threatening letters that stated their entire families would be murdered if they refused to do things in the Japanese way. The Municipal Council did not comply with the Japanese request at this time, but in August it began to censor all Chinese newspapers in the Settlement. Two foreign censors and two Chinese censors took turns visiting the papers, toning down all words and terms that might provoke the Japanese. News emanating from Chungking or reports encouraging Chinese patriotism was generally suppressed. As a result, blanks often appeared in the papers.<sup>277</sup>

The side-effects of the foreign authority's appeasement of Japanese aggressions soon became obvious, as the Japanese launched an anti-British campaign in late May. The Japanese carried out the campaign through some 30 pro-Japanese newspapers in cities under their control. Some articles attacked the British and American missionaries and their activities. Other articles said that the British support to the Chinese Nationalist Party had caused the Sino-Japanese War. These newspapers further incited the Chinese to carry out anti-British activities. The *Review* commented that "the purpose behind these anti-British propaganda campaigns has been to divert Chinese animosities away from the Japanese and toward the British and other

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<sup>276</sup> Ting, *Government Control of the Press in Modern China: 1900-1949*, 128.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

foreigners.”<sup>278</sup> Great Britain was the primary Western colonist in China for approximately half a century, followed by France and the Germany. The Japanese attempted to erase all former interest-sharers to pave a way for its sole governance of China. Therefore, even though the British had worked so hard to play down any anti-Japanese elements in the British-controlled area, it did not stop the Japanese from eroding Western interests in China.

Meanwhile, the Japanese intensified other methods of control adopted since 1938, such as postal censorship, propaganda and terrorism. The Japanese censors in Shanghai confiscated all those publications that were not pro-Japanese newspapers. The subscribers of those newspapers in other cities continuously failed to receive the papers, and had to subscribe to pro-Japanese newspapers instead. For example, one foreigner in Foochow, Fukien province failed to receive the American-owned *Shanghai Evening Post*, and then switched to the American-owned *North-China Daily News*, but failed to receive the paper again. Thereafter he began to subscribe to the American-owned *China Press*, with no better luck. In the end, he had to subscribe to the *Shanghai Times*, a British newspaper with pro-Japanese overtones.<sup>279</sup> In this way, the Japanese accomplished a two-fold goal: they prevented the public from knowing what was going on in Shanghai, so that they could do whatever they wanted; the independent publications would gradually go out of business or turn into pro-Japanese

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<sup>278</sup> “Anti-British Campaign and Suppression of Chinese Newspapers,” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 88, No. 13, May 27, 1939, 399-401.

<sup>279</sup> “Interference with the Mail in the Shanghai Post Office,” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 89, No. 4, June 24, 1939, 95.

editorial, because they could not sustain financial loss with fewer subscriptions and less advertising renewed.

Japanese propaganda developed into a structured system by 1939. Large amount of propaganda newsheets targeted both Chinese and foreign readers. In March, The Japanese military published 28 newspapers in Central China to replace the old Chinese newspapers. The Japanese puppet government in Nanking operated a school to train their own journalists, and sent 50 graduates to help with the Japanese publications.<sup>280</sup> A Japanese assistant editor or adviser stationed in each office would supervise the Chinese editors, who graduated from those Japanese training program in Nanking.<sup>281</sup> Moreover, the Japanese attempted to convert the nationalistic resentment of the Chinese into racial hatred by portraying the Chinese and the Japanese, the yellow racial, were facing the common racial enemy, the White, which was represented by the British, American, and French in China. The Japanese wanted to redirect the Chinese resentment forward the “enemies of the race”, rather than against the Japanese who were considered as the enemies of their country.<sup>282</sup>

Last but not least, the Japanese continued to threaten foreign journalists’ lives if they refused to cooperate with the Japanese. Desmond wrote that newspaper editors were offered bribes; nine British and American journalists received death threats; bombs were planted and exploded in the offices of several newspapers; and others

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<sup>280</sup> Ting, *Government Control of the Press in Modern China: 1900-1949*, 130.

<sup>281</sup> “Puppets Publish Twenty-Eight Newspapers,” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 88, No. 4, March 25, 1939, 105.

<sup>282</sup> Doris Rubens, “Japanese Propaganda Efforts in Shanghai,” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 89, No. 11, August 12, 1939, 332-337.

were attacked with gunfire and grenades.<sup>283</sup>

Thus, the year 1939 was a turning point for the Shanghai publishing industry. The Japanese military moved from suppressing only Chinese anti-Japanese newspapers to all independent publications, including foreign-owned foreign-languages newspapers. Though the number of such incidents was not much by 1939, the trend was inevitable. In the next two years, the Japanese, with the assistance of the Shanghai Municipal Council and Chinese puppet government, would turn Shanghai from a heaven for publishing into a hell for independent newspapers and journalists.

***1940: Puppet Chinese Government and the Shanghai Municipal Council Assisted the Japanese to Wipe Out Foreign Publications in Shanghai***

The Japanese speeded up Asian invasion in 1940 as Germany and Italy's military expanded in Europe. Germany had by then defeated Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium and France, and begun air bombing London [See Appendix, Map 3]. In China, according to the *Japanese Monographs*, the Japanese Army concentrated its main effort on smashing Chiang Kai-shek's counteroffensive and mopping-up operations which extended to Nanning, Ichang and other areas beyond the south bank of the Yangtze River.<sup>284</sup> The policy of the Japanese Armed Forces during this period

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<sup>283</sup> Desmond, *Ties of War: World News Reporting 1940-45*, 184.

<sup>284</sup> "Fourth Year of the China Incident," in Political Strategy: Prior to Outbreak of War Part, *The Japanese Monograph*, 4. Retrieved from <http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/monos/146/index.html>

gradually shifted from military operations to political strategy. Their goals were to have:

1. Non-expansion of operations area.
2. Promotion of pacification and peace preservation activities in occupied areas.
3. Cooperation in the growth of a new central government.
4. Undermine the fighting strength of Chiang Kai-shek's army through a tight sea blockade and effective interception of Chiang-aid routes from Burma, northern French Indo-China, Hongkong and Kwangchowan.<sup>285</sup>

This document revealed that the Japanese meant to solidify their powers in occupied areas, build new social orders and expand military forces into China's south. The Japanese actions against the Shanghai press in 1940 also revealed such a plan. After the Japanese controlled the Chinese city of Shanghai and weakened the Chinese press in the International Settlement, they moved to control the foreign publications in the Settlement. From 1940 to 1941, the press in the Settlement generally faced two pressures: the oppression from the puppet Chinese government, and the censorship from the Shanghai Municipal Council. These two forces, together with the Japanese terrorist threats, gradually expelled a large number of foreign journalists and stopped publications from the Shanghai market. The International Settlement, which was once the publishing heaven for a diversity of publications regardless of nationality and ownership, had been filled with pro-Japanese press. Up to then, the Japanese had

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<sup>285</sup> Ibid., 5.

almost completed erasing conflicting Chinese and foreign powers, and was about to establish its “New Orders” in Shanghai.

In March of 1940, Japanese set up a so-called Reformed Government of China in Nanking, headed by Wang Ching-wei, who sided with the Japanese to oppose the Communists and Chiang Kai-shek. This echoed Japanese strategy in 1938 when they planned to replace the Chinese Central Government with a pro-Japanese Chinese regime if the former one refused to comply.<sup>286</sup> Soon, Wang established at least 40 vernacular newspapers in various provinces to present materials that the Japanese wanted the people to read and believe. Some of the newspapers were Wang’s personal organs, while others were made to resemble established and respected newspapers such as the *Shun Pao* of Shanghai, the *Ta Kung Pao* of Tientsin (moved to Shanghai in 1938), and the *Yih Shih Pao*, also of Tientsin.<sup>287</sup> The Japanese operated two news agencies to provide information to these propaganda-based newspapers. One was the *China News Agency (CNA)*, and the other was the *United Press of China News Agency*. Again, the Japanese wanted to create an impression of authenticity by giving the agencies names related to the official *Chinese Nationalist Central News Agency (CNA)*, and the American *United Press*. In the late spring of 1940, both agencies were abolished in favor of a new one, the *Central Press Service*.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>286</sup> Appendix 11, *The Japanese Monograph*.

<sup>287</sup> Desmond, *Ties of War: World News Reporting 1940-45*, 183.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid*, 184.

The Japanese military agreed to protect Wang's publicity organs in the International Settlement. Meanwhile, they arrested and deported Chinese and foreign journalists who were unsympathetic toward the reformed Nanking government and the Japanese.<sup>289</sup> By July the Japanese and Wang published a list of 87 "wanted" men living in the International Settlement.<sup>290</sup> They sent out warning letters to induce foreign journalists to leave China voluntarily. When such threats failed, journalists were forced to leave in the summer of 1940, or they were told that their lives would be in great danger.<sup>291</sup>

The majority of the foreign names on the list belonged to American journalists, which indicated that the Japanese now shifted the focus toward American journalists in Shanghai. After a series of anti-British campaigns in 1939, the British press in Shanghai lost their voices. Two British newspapers, *North China Daily News*, and the *Shanghai Times*, had followed either appeasement or pro-Nanking policies. The out-spoken American press became the next victim.

Meanwhile, the Shanghai Municipal Council's censorship continued in

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<sup>289</sup> "Puppets Would Control Press by Arresting, Deporting, Independent Newsmen," *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 93, No. 8, July 20, 1940, 270-271.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid. Foreign journalists that were on the list include: Norwood F. Allman, member of the Shanghai Municipal Council, leading American lawyer and a member of the firm controlling the American registered *Shun Pao*, a well know Chinese daily newspaper; C.V. Starr, president of the post-Mercury Company, publisher of the *Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury*, *Ta Mei Wan Pao*, *Ta Mei Chou Pao*, and prominent as an insurance magnate in the Asia; Randall Gould, editor of the *Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury*; J. B. Powell, editor and publisher of *The Review* and executive editor of the *China Press*; Hal P. Mills, American publisher of the *Hwa Mei Wan Pao*, *Hwa Mei Chun Pao*, and *Hwa Mei Weekly*; Carroll D. Alcott, local American radio newscaster and crime reporter on the *China Press*; J.A.E. Sanders-Bates, British director of the University Press which publishes the *Morning Leader*, *News Digest* and *British Evening News*.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid., 184.

1940. The papers could only obey the censors, otherwise they would be suspended. The situation was worse than 1938, when the papers could argue with the censors if they felt the censorship was too severe or unreasonable. For example, on August 9, 1940, the press censors of the Shanghai Municipal Police visited the American owned *Chinese-American Daily News*, to eliminate news items in whole or in part “should the wording be considered objectionable.”<sup>292</sup> The censors declared if the paper obstructed their work, not a single copy would be allowed on the streets. During the previous months, the *Chinese-American Daily News* was openly anti-Japanese and anti-Nanking, and was bombed several times. Harry M. Stuckgold, the registered American owner of the paper, received threatening letters and was included on the recent deportation list.<sup>293</sup> Stuckgold said that his paper had no trouble when it published all sorts of editorials that criticized the Municipal Council. But it got into trouble every time when it carried news articles against Wang.<sup>294</sup> Furthermore, the Municipal Council had legalized censorship. It confirmed that all Chinese-language newspapers within the settlement, regardless of being foreign-owned or Chinese-owned, would be subject to censorship raids without warning.<sup>295</sup> Another outbreak of press restriction in the International Settlement occurred in mid November. The governments began imposing fines and arrests to several Chinese newspaper

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<sup>292</sup> “S.M.C Censors Local Vernacular Organ,” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 93, No. 12, August 17, 1940, 438.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid.

<sup>294</sup> “Newsmen Face More and More Restrictions; Harry Stuckgold Vigorously Criticizes Shanghai Policy,” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 94, No. 13, November 30, 1940, 427, 434.

<sup>295</sup> “S.M.C Censors Local Vernacular Organ,” *The China Weekly Review*, 438.

editors and reporters.<sup>296</sup>

Thus, the International Settlement of Shanghai was no longer a heaven of security. The Japanese used the Municipal police forces to arrest Chinese, who in the past may have been arrested in the foreign areas, only on warrants issued by the First Special District Court, or by higher Chinese judicial organs. However, the Japanese now demanded the Municipal Council to arrest these men, even though the Japanese themselves had no legal right to arrest anyone in the foreign area. They used terrorism against the judges, interpreters, and other officials of the First Special District Court.<sup>297</sup>

By then, the Municipal Council had almost turned into another Japanese puppet government by protecting the Japanese interests, instead of speaking for the general interests of foreign residents in the Settlement. This did not happen overnight. On one side, before the Japanese troops entered Shanghai, the Japanese were already one of the major populations in the Settlement, even though the British and Americans were then the dominant powers. It was within the Japanese rights to require the Council to protect Japanese “reputations” from being ruined by the Chinese newspapers if such damages existed. As the Japanese power grew and challenged the British and American authorities by carrying out anti-Westerner propaganda and other terrorist activities, the Japanese gradually dominated the International Settlement.

On the other side, the appeasement policies adopted by the Council and the

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<sup>296</sup> “Newsmen Face More and More Restrictions; Harry Stuckgold Vigorously Criticizes Shanghai Policy,” *The China Weekly Review*, 427, 434.

<sup>297</sup> “Reign of Lawlessness Replaces Rule of Law in Shanghai,” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 94, No. 3, September 21, 1940, 75.

British and American governments at home encouraged the Japanese to dominate the Settlement eventually. Historically, the Council was reluctant to take positions at the beginning of the Sino-Japanese battle in the Chinese city of Shanghai. The Council tried to remain a neutral and isolated regime in order to maintain the foreign business and daily life as before. However, such a plan soon vanished as patriotic, foreign-owned Chinese-language newspapers flew into the Settlement for extra-privileged protections. In order to preserve a peaceful environment, according to the Council, the police force of the Council began to warn anti-Japanese newspapers in 1938, then censored the papers in 1939, and eventually assisted the Japanese in arresting Chinese journalists and deporting foreign journalists in 1940. From the moment the Council followed the Japanese orders, it could no longer isolate itself from the war. The Council's censorship of the anti-Japanese publications, in fact, provided more market space for the pro-Japanese publications, whose propaganda helped the Japanese military to control the city. Once the Municipal Council helped the Japanese defeat all Chinese resistance publications, the major confronting forces toward the Japanese, especially the foreign press in the international community, lost protection. They were too weak to fight alone against the Japanese, because they lacked institutional or government support. As the whole city was falling into Japanese hands, the foreign publications registered in the International Settlement would suffer the same destiny as their Chinese counterparts.

### ***1941: The Japanese Took Over All Independent Publications in Shanghai***

The Japanese treated all neutral and anti-Japanese publications and journalists as potential enemies, whether they were Chinese or Westerners. The attacks on foreign publications and journalists became open in 1941. Since early May, the Japanese military authorities seized copies of foreign and Chinese newspapers in Shanghai. Only the Wang's papers or those espousing a pro-Japanese point of view escaped the Japanese confiscation order, according to reports from subscribers. Independent publishers had to re-route their papers to avoid censorship at the Japanese –occupied ports.<sup>298</sup> From July 1941, the first open attack on American and other foreign correspondents began.<sup>299</sup> The Japanese ordered the mayor of Shanghai to arrange the deportations of seven Western journalists: J.B. Powell, C.V. Starr, Randall Gould, Carroll Alcott, Hal P. Mills, Norwood F. Allman, and J.A.E. Sanders-Bates.<sup>300</sup> Immediately after the publication of this “blacklist,” the Municipal police stationed guards at all the newspaper offices.<sup>301</sup> Later that July, three of the seven foreign correspondents departed for the U.S.<sup>302</sup>

Finally, on December 8, 1941, the day after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, Japanese Marines took over the International Settlement in Shanghai. The independent press in Shanghai fell into great danger within a few hours. By 10 a.m.,

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<sup>298</sup> “Japanese Grab Shanghai Papers,” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 97, No. 1, June 7, 1941, 11.

<sup>299</sup> Powell, *My 25 Years in China*, chapter 31, F 123, JBPP.

<sup>300</sup> Ting, *Government Control of the Press in Modern China: 1900-1949*, 131.

<sup>301</sup> Powell, *My 25 Years in China*, chapter 31, F 123, JBPP.

<sup>302</sup> *Ibid.*, 9-10.

the Japanese stationed guards in all cable and radio offices and cut off all communications.<sup>303</sup> Before noon, the Japanese army sealed every newspaper and magazine plant in the city.<sup>304</sup> The *Review* and the *China Press* were included. All anti-Japanese or anti-Puppet Wang papers disappeared. After sealing independent publications, the Japanese published official releases to replace the regular ones. Almost overnight, thousands of regular newspapers and magazines were snuffed out and replaced by propaganda sheets.<sup>305</sup> Shanghai, as the free publishing center for more than half a century was completely ruined. Foreign journalists, who chose to stay or who did not leave the battlefield in time, faced Japanese arrests, imprisonments, or even executions.

The process of Japanese taking over Shanghai exemplified Japanese occupations in other Chinese cities. The Japanese way of controlling the press embodied its strategy in controlling other businesses as well. Within four years, the Japanese transformed an international city of diversity into a Japanese centralized state. Dozens of newspapers representing various voices, ownerships, nationalities, and languages were replaced with pro-Japanese or pro-Puppet Wang ones.

How could the Japanese transform the city so quickly? The Japanese strategy was to attack its major enemy first and gradually isolate smaller competitors, and then defeat them one by one. In late 1937, the Japanese occupied the Chinese city of

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<sup>303</sup> Powell, *My 25 Years in China*, chapter 32, 33, F 125, JBPP, 3-5.

<sup>304</sup> John B. Powell, "My Fight for a Free Press in China," *Advertising's War Task and Post-war Responsibility: Highlights of the War Advertising Conference* (presented at Advertising Federation of America, June 28-30, 1943).

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.*

Shanghai, and attacked Chinese-owned newspapers. Beginning from 1938, the Japanese started to accuse the foreign-registered Chinese newspapers in the International Settlement of disturbing the peace. With the cooperation of the Municipal Council, the Japanese suspended the Chinese newspapers or turned them into pro-Japanese ones. Soon after that, the Japanese targeted the foreign newspapers in the settlement, starting from the British-owned newspapers. The exact methods may be different from what had been applied to the Chinese newspapers, but the Japanese goal remained the same: to root out any conflicting interests in China that were in the way of Japanese expansion. After the Japanese confiscated the British newspapers, American journalists and publications faced immediate dangers. This time, the Japanese were strong and bold enough to issue suspension and deportation of newspapers, and imprisonment of journalists directly without the assistance of the Municipal Council. During this process, the Japanese utilized the foreigners' appeasement policies to alienate the Chinese newspapers from the foreign interests, persuaded the Westerners to believe that suppressing the Chinese independent publications was to protect the Western interests in the Settlement. It was not long before the foreign newspapermen realized that they were trapped in a dilemma with only two options: surrender or die.

The Japanese used such tactics as postal censorship, propaganda, terrorism, and legal regulations through the reformed Nanking government and the Shanghai Municipal Council, and direct military suppressions to exercise the above strategies. Postal censorship, though seemingly gentle compared to the other methods, had a

profound impact on the publications. Before the Japanese were authorized to censor the wording of the newspapers, they simply cut off the communication between the independent newspapers and the outside world. Domino effects followed. The newspapers lost substantial subscriptions as subscribers could not receive the papers in time and had to switch to more pro-Japanese publications. The advertising fell. News organization could not fill important news timely or accurately as the international news sources were cut short or completely blocked. As a result, some newspapers had to suspend or move elsewhere, such as to Hong Kong or Malaysia. The rest of them survived, but only as propaganda tools for the Japanese.

Before the Japanese established its own authority in invaded areas, they always used the local authorities to transform the community. In the Shanghai International Settlement, the Japanese legalized its control methods through orders of Shanghai Municipal Council, and then the Chinese Puppet Government in Nanking. In this way, the Japanese diverted the local residents' resentment away from the Japanese and toward the local authorities. When the time came, the Japanese military cracked down on all neutral and anti-Japanese publications overnight.

Japanese military suppression of the press in the Shanghai International Settlement was only a short episode of its entire China campaign. Since public opinion sometimes wins a war, the press always becomes the first and worst casualty of a war. In the Sino-Japanese battlefield, the situation was slightly different as the invading military suppressed not only the native publications, but all other nationals as well. Whoever shares a different philosophy becomes a war casualty.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE JAPANESE MILITARY PARALYZED JOHN B. POWELL AND *THE CHINA WEEKLY REVIEW***

Among the media casualties of the Sino-Japanese War, the most innocent and fragile victims were the foreign journalists and publications of the neutral governments who were not directly involved in the war. The independent foreign journalists risked their lives and assets to keep the press going. They fought to provide accurate and timely wartime reports, even though it was doomed to fail in an occupied territory. Their home governments did not openly oppose the Japanese, but rather feared being drawn into a distant regional conflict. With no institutional support or protection from the home countries, independent foreign journalists had to fight alone against the Japanese military control.

American journalists and publications became the next target after the Japanese weakened the British influence in Shanghai International Settlement. Chapter Four will center on an American independent editor and publisher John B. Powell and his weekly journal the *Review* to explain how the conflict between the Japanese military and an independent American journalist would inevitably lead to personal tragedy. In fact, Powell's story represents many their independent foreign journalists who reported in China during that period.

From the Shanghai Incident in 1937 until the Pearl Harbor Incident in 1941, Powell's editorials reflected the American's opinions and interests in East Asia, which were influenced by the U.S. East Asian policies in the early twentieth century. Meanwhile, as a twenty-year veteran reporter in China, Powell witnessed and recounted the Japanese expansion in Asia since World War I. His reports in the *Review* delivered a personal account of the Asian crises to the American audience at home, and provided detailed and timely facts for American politicians to consider the Japanese threat. In this context, Powell's editorials in the *Review* were rooted in a controversial Sino-U.S.-Japan relationship. They also reflected the relationship in a highly sensitive historical moment right before World War II fully broke out by the end of 1941. One person's nightmare was a prelude to a worldwide disaster.

This chapter primarily relies on Powell's editorials in the *Review* from 1937 to 1941. In addition, Powell's manuscripts explain his journalistic conflict with the Japanese military in a context of Sino-U.S.-Japan relations during the second Sino-Japanese War. The arguments here includes: the conflicts between Powell and the Japanese military based upon Powell's liberal and independent editorial policies that contradicted the Japanese information control during wartime. And the Japanese attempted to stop Powell from disclosing their plans of swallowing China. While Powell and the *Review* did not oppose the Japanese at first, the Japanese military's increasing offences drove Powell to be anti-Japanese. In addition, the conflict between the Japanese militarism dictatorship and one liberal American journalist was, in fact, a battle in which each side tried to protect their own national interests.

## ***Which Side to Take? Japanese Attack on Shanghai in 1937 Impacted U.S. Asian Policy***

The Japanese had perceived the U.S. as a potential enemy since World War I, whereas the U.S. hesitated to put Japan on its blacklist.<sup>306</sup> That hesitation, named as “isolationism” in a political term, dominated U.S. Asian policy since the early 1900s until the Japanese twice openly attacked Shanghai, the center of U.S. commercial interests in China. Even though the U.S., as well as the other Western countries, condemned Japan, they took little action beyond diplomatic protests and resolutions. The Americans continued an appeasement policy toward Japan, because they were concerned that any strong defense would harm the U.S.-Japanese relations.

Washington, reluctant to take sides, did not want to get into a foreign war during the 1930s. The American public was isolationist, following World War I, after the U.S. lost thousands of soldiers and money without actually winning political respect and powers from those leading European governments. The grim outlook of Europe also limited American Asian Policy. While the Spanish civil war was near the end of its second year, the German government finished annexing Austria in March of 1937. The British foreign policies remained in doubt as the government was undergoing a transitional period from appeasement to involvement. The British had not yet worked out its policy to deal with Europe, which left its policy in the East

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<sup>306</sup> Louise Young, “*Japan at War: History Writing on the Crisis of the 1930s*” in *The Origin of the Second World War Reconsidered*, ed. Gordon Martel (London and New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 1992), 168;

“China Incident,” in *The Japanese Monographs*, 10. Retrieved from <http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/monos/144/144chap2.html#Primary%20Causes%20of%20China>

unknown.<sup>307</sup>

Another U.S. concern came from its fragile economy. After the Great Depression in 1929, the U.S. economy was still attempting to recover through 1937. According to several conferences on U.S. Asian policies, the main task of the country and the administration in the spring of 1938 was not American foreign policies, but centered on the new business depression: the relations between capital and labor, and the countrywide debate over the President Roosevelt's economic recovery policies.<sup>308</sup> The U.S. was too preoccupied with solving domestic financial problems to worry about the Japanese invasion of China. As a result, many influential American citizens back home and the American ambassador in Tokyo recommended a moderate policy toward the Japanese military expansion in China. They said that a stronger stand by Washington might provoke the Japanese militarists to take an even more intransigent stance.<sup>309</sup>

What if the U.S. had kept the appeasement policy throughout the entire Sino-Japanese War? Would the Japanese occupation of China have harmed U.S. interests in Asia? And if so, in what ways? According to Lieu, a contributor to the *China Critic*, one of the most significant foreseeable damages was that the Japanese occupation of China would menace American international trade with both

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<sup>307</sup> Farley, ed. "The Situation Confronted by the Conferences" in *American Far Eastern Policy and the Sino-Japanese War*, 2-3.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>309</sup> Powell, *My Twenty-five Years in China*, 309; See too, Davidann, "'A Certain Presentiment of Fatal Danger': The Sino-Japanese War and U.S.-Japanese Relations, 1937-1939" in *Cultural Diplomacy in U.S.-Japanese Relations, 1919-1941*, 180-181.

China and Japan, and thus affect the American domestic market.<sup>310</sup> However, U.S. trade and investment in Asia did not account much for its entire economic revenue. For example, only two to three percent of U.S. exports went to China, and only eight percent went to Japan; the imports from China only made up three percent of U.S. total imports, and Japan furnished seven per cent; investments in China amount to one or two per cent, in Japan two or three per cent of all U.S. capital invested abroad.<sup>311</sup> Rather, the U.S. cared about the trading rights in the long term, but not the actual financial loss in the short term. According to a 1938 discussion organized by the American Council of the Institute of Pacific Relations, many members agreed that “the money value of the trade in question is of less importance than the principle of the rights to trade. If we should allow our traders to be discriminated against and our rights under international law to be violated in any part of the world, they would be in danger everywhere.”<sup>312</sup> The prediction was that once Japan controlled the Chinese market, the Japanese could discriminate against American products through economic boycott, such as increasing tariff or tax on American businessmen. Once such methods were executed in China, other Japanese-dominated areas might adopt a similar policy. However, this potential threat was not obvious enough in 1937 to compel the U.S. to oppose Japan with any action.

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<sup>310</sup> D. K. Lieu, “How Japanese Control of China Will Menace U.S. Industries and National Defense,” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 83, No. 2, December 11, 1937, 46. Reprinted from the *China Critic*, November 25, 1937.

<sup>311</sup> Farley, ed. “The Interests of the United States in the Far East” in *American Far Eastern Policy and the Sino-Japanese War*, 9.

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.*

Most American newspapers did not yet relate the Shanghai Incident to the importance of protecting American international trading rights in overseas markets. Sharing a similar standpoint with Washington, the American press in Shanghai was also initially reluctant to take a side, although they appeared fully sympathetic to China on its encounters with the Japanese invasion. Instead, the American journalists seemed to give equal coverage of both the Chinese and Japanese. They profited from providing what was then considered the “objective news,” because the most extensive war coverage often came from journalists of neutral states.

At first, Powell and the *Review* were no exception to the majority of independent American press in Shanghai in term of its editorial attitude toward the Sino-Japanese conflict. Powell did not publish any article that condemned Japanese invasion immediately following the Shanghai Incident on August 13, 1937. In the *Review*, one week after the Shanghai Incident, Powell mainly recounted important battles between the Chinese and the Japanese, and presented an equal amount of coverage on both sides. His only complaint about the battle, which was revealed in his autobiography, was that the warfare affected regular printing and delivery of his journal. As Powell recalled, that August 21 issue declined from a regular 60 pages to 16 pages. In fact, the journal was so poorly printed that it was difficult to read, Powell recounted.<sup>313</sup>

The abbreviated form was due to a number of causes. Among them was the impossibility of using the regular typesetting machines because the gas was cut off.

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<sup>313</sup> Powell, *My Twenty-five Years in China*, 299.

The printing plant was closed down entirely, due to a fire.<sup>314</sup> In fact, Powell had to print *The Review* in a basement to avoid bombings. The size changed to “a small edition on a little hand press.”<sup>315</sup> The miniature edition recorded that a considerable number of bombings resulted in the killing of thousands of Chinese refugees who were fleeing from the Japanese army. The Japanese also established air control over Shanghai, despite the fact that the British had requested the Japanese to exclude the city.<sup>316</sup>

For the first time, the American attitude toward the Japanese turned on December 12, 1937, when the Japanese maliciously machine-gunned and sunk U.S. Gunboat “Panay” in the lower Yangtze River, one day before the so-called “the Rape of Nanking”. The U.S. claimed that the boat was used as a refuge by American embassy personnel during the Japanese invasion of Nanking.<sup>317</sup> Although the Japanese said they mistook the U.S. Panay for a Chinese vessel, the American community in Shanghai considered the incident as a Japanese warning to the U.S. government. Overseas Americans began urging Washington to take a stronger position toward the Japanese aggression. Powell wrote in an editorial published on December 18, 1937,

“The crisis in China has now become an American issue and must

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<sup>314</sup> “‘War’ Edition of ‘The China Weekly Review’,” in *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 81, No. 12, August 21, 1937, 419.

<sup>315</sup> Powell, *My Twenty-five Years in China*, 299.

<sup>316</sup> Contents, *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 81, No. 12, August 21, 1937, 419.

<sup>317</sup> Davidann, “‘A Certain Presentiment of Fatal Danger’: The Sino-Japanese War and U.S.-Japanese Relations, 1937-1941”, in *Cultural Diplomacy in U.S.-Japanese Relations: 1919-1941*, 186.

be settled by the United States, one way or another—either get[s] out or prepare[s] to fight! The United States is, in many respects, back in the position it occupied before the World War. As the situation is now developing in the Far East the Americans must decide what they intend to do about the Sino-Japanese crisis.”<sup>318</sup>

Almost three weeks later, Japanese apologized. While Washington accepted Japan’s overtures, they rejected the Japanese claim that the attack on Panay was purely accidental and unintentional. According to the commander of the U.S. Panay, James J. Hughes, the Panay was anchored with large American flags before the Japanese attack in an open space on the river visible for miles in every direction. The Japanese planes kept attacking the ship for almost an hour, enough time for the Japanese to tell whether it was a Chinese vessel or an American gunboat.<sup>319</sup> A review about this incident said that three Americans and an Italian citizen died, and many others were wounded. In fact, two Standard Oil ships of an American oil company were also sunk at the same time. The Japanese government effectively closed much of the Yangtze River trade to Standard Oil, and thus turned the fuel commerce into a Japanese monopoly.<sup>320</sup>

Though the American public was outraged, they were also concerned that an open confrontation with Japan could lead to a potential war. Congress was split between two sides: strict isolationists who wanted no further engagement, and others

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<sup>318</sup> “Bombing of Anglo-American Ships and Future U.S. Policy,” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 83, No. 3, December 18, 1937, 59; See too “The Sinking of USS Panay,” in *The Japanese Monographs*, Chapter Two, 32. Retrieved from <http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/monos/144/144chap2.html#The%20sinking%20of%20the%20USS%20Panay>

<sup>319</sup> “Japan Replies to U.S. Protest on ‘Panay’—Loss to be Indemnified,” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 83, No. 5, January 1, 1938, 121-122.

<sup>320</sup> Walter Lafeber, “The Slipknot: Part 2 from Mukden to Pearl Harbor,” in *The Clash: A History of U.S.-Japan Relations* (New York, London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997), 186-187.

who proposed economic sanctions against Japan.<sup>321</sup> The two sides argued in the following years, until the U.S. responded with a declaration of war after December 7, 1941.<sup>322</sup> In the meantime, Washington attempted to resolve issues with Japan in a peaceful way<sup>323</sup> after Japan apologized for the incidence and promised to control the rampaging Japanese troops in Nanking. Japan also effectively paid for reparations. The American public opinion, as measured by editorials in leading newspapers, grew more and more friendly to Japan and less supportive of China in early 1938, said Lafeber.<sup>324</sup>

However, the Panay incident influenced Powell's personal attitude toward the Sino-Japanese War, and impacted his editorial opinions toward the Japanese military. He recalled in his manuscript that "The Panay incident had special significance for me ... as it resulted in the most bizarre experience of my journalist career, or possibly that of any other correspondents."<sup>325</sup> From then on, Powell was cautious about the Japanese actions in China and beyond. He disclosed Japanese plans clearly through the *Review*, and alerted the American public of Japanese threats.

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<sup>321</sup> Davidann, "'A Certain Presentiment of Fatal Danger': The Sino-Japanese War and U.S.-Japanese Relations, 1937-1941," in *Cultural Diplomacy in U.S.-Japanese Relations, 1919-1941*, 186.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid.

<sup>323</sup> "American Accepts Japan's Apologies for the Sinking of the U.S.S. 'Panay,' But Issues Stern Warning," *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 83, No. 5, January 1, 1938, 120.

<sup>324</sup> Lafeber, "The Slipknot: Part 2 from Mukden to Pearl Harbor," in *The Clash: A History of U.S.-Japan Relations*, 187.

<sup>325</sup> Powell, "My 25 Years in China, chapter 28," F 118, JBPP.

*1938: Powell Foresaw Japanese Ambitious Asian Plans, Whereas Washington Appeased*

By 1938, three major trends went on in the Sino-Japanese battlefield. The Chinese Nationalist Government, after several defeats in the east coast and central China, withdrew further into the southwestern inner lands. The Japanese military consolidated its forces in the lower Yangtze River, and aggressively moved toward China's south and west. Since October 1938, Japan attempted to establish a new regime in China to reform the nation.<sup>326</sup> According to the Japanese national policy in 1938, a reformed China would turn around anti-Japanese and pro-Communist ideas into pro-Japanese and anti-Communist opinions; would rid itself of the Chinese tendency to rely upon Europe and America, and create its own axis of cooperation between Japan, Manchukuo, and China; and would organize a union of Asian nations.<sup>327</sup> Facing a falling China and rising Japan, the U.S. as well as the European powers at first hesitated, and then mediated, despite the fact that more Americans in Asia foresaw a potential Japanese military threat to their lives and properties.

The Japanese controls over the wartime media in Shanghai went along with Japan's national policies. Powell's conflict with Japanese military began here when his editorials from August 1937 to December 1941 indicated that he disfavored the Japanese military aggression. Powell, as an independent journalist and publisher, disagreed with any form of censorship, propaganda, and terrorism that were adopted

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<sup>326</sup> "National Policy toward China during and after October 1938," in *The Japanese Monographs*, 39. Retrieved from <http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/monos/144/144chap3.html>

<sup>327</sup> Ibid.

by the Japanese to control the free press. Too, Powell, as an American resident in China, was concerned that Japanese occupation and invasion would hurt American interests throughout Asia. Therefore, whenever the Japanese carried out new methods addressing either of these two issues, Powell published corresponding editorials to condemn the Japanese policies. His standpoint was clear and his editorials were critical, even before Washington responded to Japan officially.

Though later most of Powell's predictions on Japanese plans in China were right, it was hard for him to sustain his viewpoints publicly when the U.S. government appeased the Japanese aggression. As discussed in Chapter Three, the Japanese began to issue postal censorship and started a propaganda campaigns in the Chinese city of Shanghai. Then the Japanese targeted Western media after cracking down on the Chinese publications in the name of suppressing anti-Japanese forces and protecting the Japanese interests. Powell condemned any type of Japanese censorship. For example, when the Japanese censored the Western cable office in January 1938, Powell published five editorials within three months, criticizing such Japanese censorship. Among two editorials on January 22 and 29, Powell denied the legality and authority of the Japanese to act. He said,

“First of all ...the Japanese did not get the official permission of the diplomatic authorities of the three countries whose nationals own and operate the cables, America, Britain and Denmark. Secondly, the Japanese did not officially rule Shanghai area, and thus did not have the authority to execute censorship.”<sup>328</sup>

Powell alerted his colleagues that “more severe censorship may come in the near

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<sup>328</sup> “Japanese Censor Holds Up All Reports of Atrocities,” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 83, No. 8, January 22, 1938, 199-200; “Guardian Corroborates Illegality of Japanese Censorship,” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 83, No. 9, January 29, 1938, 228-229.

future. It would not be long before the Japanese censors begin interfering with commercial messages, or censor all mail, as they did in Peiping and Tientsin.”<sup>329</sup> He predicted that the Japanese would sooner or later jeopardize all foreign interests in Shanghai, if the leaders in foreign communities kept mediating. By March, Powell wrote that “spying into commercial and personal mails of foreigners will greatly interfere and delay foreigners’ businesses and personal lives.”<sup>330</sup> In two other articles in April, Powell disclosed that the Japanese censorship affected the subscription of the *Review*, which had subscribers in North China who claimed not to get the paper in time, and thus, they canceled their subscriptions.<sup>331</sup> By June, Powell wrote that the Japanese censorship greatly endangered the regular mailing services among businesses and individuals. He called for a firmer attitude of the foreign counsel in Shanghai.

Unless the foreign consular and diplomatic authorities take a strong stand on the matter, it is inevitable that the foreigners here will, sooner or later, through their chambers of commerce or otherwise, take matters into their own hands and establish foreign postal agencies for the dispatching of mail independently of the regular Post Office, which is completely under Japanese military domination.<sup>332</sup>

Powell’s secondary conflict with the Japanese military resulted from his courageous protection on American interests in China. Following the Panay incident

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<sup>329</sup> “Japanese Censor Holds Up All Reports of Atrocities,” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 83, No. 8, January 22, 1938, 199-200.

<sup>330</sup> “Postal Censorship Should Not Be Permitted,” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 84, No. 1, March 5, 1938, 1-2.

<sup>331</sup> “Why General Terauchi Failed to Receive His Paper,” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 84, No. 6, April 9, 1938, 145; “Why Another Japanese Subscriber Didn’t Receive the Paper?” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 84, No. 8, April 23, 1938, 205.

<sup>332</sup> Japanese Interference with the Mail at Shanghai, *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 85, No. 6, July 9, 1938, 181-182.

and the “Rape of Nanking”, a strong anti-Japanese sentiment grew in the U.S., even though some officials still proposed a meditative solution to avoid an open warfare with Japan.<sup>333</sup> Although the American public at home was concerned about the situation in China, they tended to talk instead of taking actions. Congressional debates continued on questions such as which side would win the Sino-Japanese War, what would be the possible outcome of the war, and what result would benefit the U.S. more.<sup>334</sup>

In fact, the political attitude of the U.S. toward the Sino-Japanese War was complex. Though China seemed more likely to win, and its victory would protect American economic interests in the long term, a partial Japanese victory might serve American political and ideological interests. Supporter of this latter opinion agreed that a partial Japanese victory in China would keep the Japanese from consolidating its positions in China, and thus relieving the U.S. of possible Japanese threats.<sup>335</sup> Thus, for about a year following the Panay incident, American official opinions toward the war were mixed and vague.

In contrast, Powell published assertive editorials urging the Americans to fight against the Japanese militarism, even before Washington assured its standpoint. The Japanese spent a lot of money on propaganda to keep the rest of the world in the dark

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<sup>333</sup> Davidann, “‘A Certain Presentiment of Fatal Danger’: The Sino-Japanese War and U.S.-Japanese Relations, 1937-1941,” in *Cultural Diplomacy in U.S.-Japanese Relations, 1919-1941*, 188.

<sup>334</sup> Ibid.

<sup>335</sup> Farley, “American Interests and the Sino-Japanese War,” in *American Far Eastern Policy and the Sino-Japanese War*, 14-23.

about the Sino-Japanese War,<sup>336</sup> but Powell remained awake. He revealed Japan's ambitions very clearly in the *Review*: "Japan's goal is to root foreign business out of the fertile Chinese soil, and to replace it with her own enterprises. Foreign interests will be allowed to operate in this country, --- on the payment of a tribute to Japan, --- only when they produce a commodity for which the Japanese have not yet found a substitute."<sup>337</sup> In fact, Japan's war against foreigners in China began even before the governments officially announced the war.<sup>338</sup> According to Powell's report in November 1938, the Japanese forced Chinese businessmen and customers to boycott American and European goods. Chinese dealers who stored foreign goods, such as matches or cotton cloth, were immediately subjected to a "special tax". As a result, no foreign goods could be found in any of the stores. Along the Shanghai-Nanking Railway, no foreign merchandise could be shipped, except by Japanese forwarding agents, which assessed transit-taxes against American and European merchandise while the Japanese goods went through free. The Japanese posted such slogans as "Great Britain and Russia Are China's Real Enemies," "America is Our Second Enemy," "Boycott British and American Goods," "Buy Japanese Goods" in Soochow, Wusih, and Hangchow nearby Shanghai.<sup>339</sup> Japanese gradually evacuated Western

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<sup>336</sup> "Japan Spends Millions to Make the World 'Understand'," *The China Weekly Review*, 15 October 1938, 219.

<sup>337</sup> "Japan's War on Foreign Business," *The China Weekly Review*, May 28, 1938, 2.

<sup>338</sup> Davidann, "America is Very Difficult to Get Along with: Anti-Americanism, Japanese Militarism, and Spying, 1934-1937," in *Cultural Diplomacy in U.S.-Japanese Relations, 1919-1941*, 159-177.

<sup>339</sup> "What is Likely to Happen on the American-Japanese Front," *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 86, No. 10, November 5, 1938, 307-308.

interests out of China by propaganda, business boycott and terrorism.

Powell proposed a political solution to the current Japanese hostilities toward the American community. In June, he wrote that the American support of the Chinese Nationalist Party to unify China served American commercial interests in China. The Japanese military adventures in China had cost Americans, individuals, companies, and organizations, approximately U.S. \$ 150 million since the beginning of the war. American public opinion was ripe for a strong declaration. Powell wrote that Americans in Asia should not wait any longer:

There is only one way for the foreigner, particular Americans, to fight the Japanese menace and that is, TELL THE PEOPLE AT HOME THE FACTS ABOUT THE SITUATION HERE! Tell them by radio, cable, letter and resolution what is going on and what we, on this fighting front, expect them to do.

There is no further point in keeping silent on the subject because the Japanese will play no favorites. The only businesses that will be able to function will be the few that control products or processes which the Japanese do not possess at the present time. But to use a commonplace statement, "it won't be long," before the Japanese find ways of producing the product or service and the favored few will then join the army of the dispossessed.<sup>340</sup>

All through 1938, Powell updated foreigners with the most recent warfare information, which assisted foreigners in evaluating wartime investments and deciding political viewpoints. He published a series of *The Day-To-Day Record of Japan's War in China*, which answered most of the questions about the Japanese military and political developments. In one of the pamphlets, *Japan's War on Foreign Business*, Powell expected that "an extensive circulation of this information in the

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<sup>340</sup> "American Must Fight to Protect Her Every Interest!" *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 85, No. 1, June 4, 1938, 1.

U.S., Britain, and other countries will, we believe, lead to the adoption of determined measures to protect what is left of foreign investment and commercial rights.” In several other subsequent editions, Powell’s titles included: “When and How the Hostilities Started”; “Early Efforts to Localize and Prevent from Spreading”; “When and How the War Spread to Shanghai; Time and Circumstances of the Shooting of the British Ambassador; The Bombing of the President Hoover”; “The Sinking of the U.S.S Panay and Shelling of the British Gunboats Bee and Ladybird”.<sup>341</sup>

In June, the U.S. Congress approved a resolution condemning Japan’s inhuman bombings of Chinese civilians at Canton. More than one member of the Senate supported an amendment to sever relations with Japan. This condemnation on Japanese military indicated a new direction in American foreign policy since the enactment of the Neutrality Resolution of August 31, 1935. Powell said the U.S. had only two choices in planning future foreign policies. The U.S. could either adopt a strict policy of isolation, or would stand firmly with Britain and France against aggressive nations.<sup>342</sup>

In August, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, further implied that the U.S. might swing away from isolationism. Roosevelt said at Kingston, Ontario, on August 18 that “the U.S. will aid Canada if Canada is attacked.” Hull said at Washington on August 15 that “the overwhelming majority of

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<sup>341</sup> “*Japan’s War on Foreign Business*,” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 84, No. 13, May 28, 1938, 1.

<sup>342</sup> “U.S. Moves toward Firmer Policy in Orient and World Affairs,” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 85, No. 4, June 25, 1938, 105-107.

mankind is determined to live in a world in which lawlessness will not be tolerated, in which order under law will prevail, and in which peaceful economic and cultural relations will be inviolate.”<sup>343</sup> However, the U.S. government announced no specific official action against the Japanese for the near future.

While the Western powers mediated, the Japanese headed steadily toward reforming China. On November 3, 1938, the Japanese announced a new order in East Asia, one founded on the “tripartite relationship or mutual aid and coordination between Japan, Manchukuo and China in political economic, cultural and other fields.” The objective was “to secure international justice, to perfect the joint defense against Communism, and to create a new culture and realize a close economic cohesion throughout East Asia.”<sup>344</sup> What Japan truly demanded from the Western powers, according to Powell, was the recognition of its “new status” in China, and the abrogation of the Nine-Power Treaty, which was signed by Japan and eight other countries in 1921 to 1922 to respect China’s territorial and administrative integrity, and also prevented any power from taking advantage of special conditions to establish a priority of rights.<sup>345</sup> In other words, the Japanese broke its previous treaties and tried to obtain more rights and interests than the other powers. By then, the Japanese had rid itself of Chinese tendency to rely upon Europe and the U.S.

Japanese established a new regime in China. Finally in late 1938, Japanese

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<sup>343</sup> “American Swinging Away From Isolation?” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 85, No. 13, August 17, 1938, 411.

<sup>344</sup> Liu, “The Sino-Japanese War: 1937-1941,” in *U.S.-China Relations: 1782-1992*, 144-145.

<sup>345</sup> “What is Likely to Happen on the American-Japanese Front,” *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 86, No. 10, November 5, 1938, 307-308.

military schemers relied on Wang Ching-wei, an important Nationalist politician who favored a peace negotiation between the Nationalist Party and the Japanese. In December, Wang discussed with the Japanese about setting up a “government of China.”<sup>346</sup> The plan was brewing, though it took another year to finally set up the new government.

### ***1939-1940: Powell Challenged Japanese Plan of Abolishing Western Interests in China***

The Japanese military had been in China for eight years by 1939. The Chinese battlefield, which was Japan’s resource bank in the early 1930s, became a quicksand that consumed much of Japanese forces, goods, and money.<sup>347</sup> The Japanese were desperate for a better plan to rule China, which was over ten times larger than Japan. The Sino-Japanese War did not end as soon as the Japanese had expected. Rather, the more Japan fought, the more it depended on American’s commodities and Axis countries’ political support. Therefore, between 1939 and 1940, the Japanese began to build and consolidate “a new order in East Asia”. The Japanese forces shifted from mopping-up and blockading operations against Chiang Kai-shek, to peace preservation and reconstruction works.<sup>348</sup> Wang Ching-wei finally established a

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<sup>346</sup> Liu, “The Sino-Japanese War: 1937-1941,” in *U.S.-China Relations: 1782-1992*, 145.

<sup>347</sup> Edwin O. Reischauer. *Japan: Past and Present* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), 177-179.

<sup>348</sup> “Operations against China during 1939,” in *The Japanese Monographs*, 45.  
Retrieved from <http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/monos/144/144chap4.html>

pro-Japanese Chinese Central Government in Nanking on March 31, 1940.<sup>349</sup> The Japanese also strengthened the relations with the Axis countries led by German and Italy, who recognized Japanese authority in China and assisted Japan in expelling the British, American, Russian and French influence in China and elsewhere in Asia.

The general American public had more of a pro-Anglo-Saxon and anti-Axis position, yet this attitude was more obvious on the civilian level than on the official level. Following German's invasion into Poland on September 1, 1939, Great Britain and France for the first time made their stands clear: there would be no further appeasement. The in Europe marked an official start of World War II. Inside the U.S., an increasing call for an economic sanction on Japan eventually compelled the U.S. to tear down the 1911 U.S.-Japan Treaty of Commerce and Navigation.<sup>350</sup> Washington readjusted its naval and air forces to prepare for a possible conflict in Asia. In addition, the U.S. assisted the Chinese Nationalist Party with loans and voluntary help. In late 1940, the tension between the U.S. and Japan grew, and set the tone for an outbreak of war between the two countries one year later.<sup>351</sup>

The American public opinion declared a pro-Chinese attitude earlier than its government. According to an editorial on the *Review* in mid January of 1939, over

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<sup>349</sup> "Japan's political moves for the establishment of the Wang Ching-wei regime (new Central Government)," in *The Japanese Monographs*, 51-53. Retrieved from <http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/monos/144/144chap4.html#Japan%27s%20political%20moves%20for%20the%20establishment%20of>

<sup>350</sup> "Third year of the China Incident (1939)," in *The Japanese Monographs*, 44; Retrieved from [http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/monos/144/144chap4.html#Third%20year%20of%20the%20China%20Incident%20\(1939\)](http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/monos/144/144chap4.html#Third%20year%20of%20the%20China%20Incident%20(1939)) See too Liu, "The Sino-Japanese War 1937-1941," in the *U.S.-China Relations: 1784-1992*, 147.

<sup>351</sup> Liu, "The Sino-Japanese War 1937-1941," in the *U.S.-China Relations: 1784-1992*, 147-148.

700 newspapers in the U.S. supported China and opposed the Japanese. The public opinion suggested that the U.S. should stop contributing to Japan's crime by restraining trading of gasoline, weapons, and consumer goods with Japan in the exchange of saving markets in China and protecting the long-term American interests in Asia.<sup>352</sup>

Washington did not respond to public opinion immediately. Rather, the Roosevelt administration had a heated discussion on which position the U.S. should take until May 1, 1939, when the expiration day of the 1935 Neutrality Act came to an end. The Americans had to figure out how to balance its national security and with its economic growth. A single dominate power in either Europe or Asia would threaten American political and economic interests. As the U.S. did not want to be physically involved in either European or Asian battlefields, the U.S. could only resist the confronting powers with its tremendous financial and economic resources. However, any embargo on commodities to the warring nations would reduce American exports, which would hurt American economic even more, particularly in a time of mounting surpluses, loss of domestic purchasing powers, and unemployment.<sup>353</sup>

While Washington was deciding what to do with Japan, the Japanese accelerated their attempts to remove Western powers from China. In June, 1939, the Japanese blocked the British and French concessions in Tientsin. The anti-British

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<sup>352</sup> "U.S. Opinion Supports China—700 Papers against Japan," *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 87, No. 7, January 14, 1939, 195.

<sup>353</sup> "U.S. Moves to Abandon Neutrality—Condemns Germany-May Oppose Japan," *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 88, No. 4, March 25, 1939, 91-92.

propaganda was popular all over Shanghai. After the Japanese stopped Chinese newspapers, they began to interfere with the independent foreign-owned newspapers published in the International Settlement. Watching clearly of the possible approaching threats, Powell published an editorial on April 22, 1939, calling for an immediate awareness and the leaders' responses to the newspaper publishers in the foreign community. He said,

The point is this: If the American people at home regard it as important that the news channels be kept open for the dissemination of reports giving an independent and democratic interpretation of American and world happenings, then the American authorities here and the leaders in the American community, would oppose to the limit of their abilities, the attempt of the Japanese warlords to muzzle the press in Shanghai.<sup>354</sup>

Powell predicted that if the foreign community did not take immediate actions, the International Settlement, "the only place in Asia where one may write or speak without official restriction," would sooner or later lose its free and independent publishing environment. He insisted that the newspaper editors and publishers in the International Settlement should take immediate steps to rectify Japanese potential censorship plans. The newspapers published under protection should follow strictly journalistic standards and ethics. Otherwise, the newspapers should be denied of foreign extraterritorial protection.<sup>355</sup> In another editorial published on May 27, 1939, Powell condemned the Japanese anti-British campaign, and defended for those Chinese newspapers and editors harmed by the Japanese. Powell realized that the American newspapers would be the

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<sup>354</sup> "The Consular Authorities and the Japanese Drive against Press-Freedom," *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 88, No. 8, April 22, 1939, 223.

<sup>355</sup> *Ibid*, 224.

next victims after the Japanese eradicated the Chinese newspapers. He said,

The fact that the foreigners have been able to maintain the independence and neutrality of the Settlement has been due, largely, to the fact that the Chinese population has supported the foreigners. And the reason the Chinese population has been able to preserve its unity against Japanese intrigue, bribery and intimidation, has largely been due to the courageous Chinese editors who stood their ground against Japanese efforts at intimidation.<sup>356</sup>

No wonder that such a claim put Powell into an enemies' category. He spoke for the anti-Japanese Chinese newspapers, even though his initial intention was to protect foreign newspapers. However, as Powell stated, the Chinese and the foreign newspapers were both sinking under censorship. He argued that the foreign publishers and newspapers should not stand by and let the Japanese terminate Chinese newspapers, because once the shelters were gone, the foreign newspapers would not survive long. Sadly, too few independent foreign journalists agreed or realized the intro-reliability between the Chinese and the foreign press. Neither did many of the foreigners dare to stand up for the Chinese and challenged the Japanese. Under such a circumstance, Powell's speech was so public and radical that the Japanese would try every possible method to disapprove his arguments.

As previously highlighted in Chapter Three, the Japanese continued to strengthen the postal censorship of both Chinese and foreign publications in Shanghai. They need personal and commercial messages in the central postal office before sending them out. They confiscated newspapers that were not pro-Japanese. Powell, known as a famous outspoken American publisher, became a victim of this censorship.

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<sup>356</sup> "Anti-British Campaign and Suppression of Chinese Newspapers," *The China Weekly Review*, Vol. 88, No. 13, May 27, 1939, 400-401.

The Japanese denied Powell's postal privileges for his publications, and mercilessly slashed his cable messages. However, the Japanese pressured Municipal authorities in Shanghai to close his magazines. The Japanese sent out threatening letters to Powell and his assistants. By December 1939, pro-Japanese advocates machine-gunned Powell's office building.<sup>357</sup>

Earlier in July 1939, the Japanese bombed Chiang Kai-shek's capital of Chungking and began mistreating the American citizens in China.<sup>358</sup> With a deteriorating situation in China and Europe, Washington began working out of a strategy to avoid entering a war while resisting the Axis countries. Finally, on July 26, 1939, Washington gave a six-month notice to Japan that the U.S. would terminate the 1911 Treaty of Commerce and Navigation with Japan. Once the Treaty lapsed on January 26 of 1940, Washington began imposing economic sanctions on Japan.<sup>359</sup> President Roosevelt reversed the open export policy by requiring export licenses for all iron ore, plate iron, iron alloys, and a number of manufactured products bound for Japan.<sup>360</sup> The new policy was to pressure Japan understand how vulnerable Japan.<sup>361</sup>

Though Washington intended to scare off Japan, and thus avoid a war, it became more obvious to some Americans in Asia by the summer of 1939 that the

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<sup>357</sup> Mark J. Gyan, "Fighting Editor from Missouri Wars on Japan", *The St. Louis Post Dispatch*, December 10, 1939, F 184, JBPP, 1.

<sup>358</sup> Lafeber, *The Clash: A History of U.S.-Japan Relations*, 189.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid; Liu, "The Sino-Japanese War," in *U.S.-China Relations: 1784-1992*, 147.

<sup>360</sup> Ibid.

<sup>361</sup> Lafeber, *The Clash: A History of U.S.-Japan Relations*, 190.

Japanese were planning an attack on the U.S.<sup>362</sup> Powell once read a statement of General Kiyokatsu Sato, a well-known Japanese military commentator who said that the Japanese fought with China and Russia for more lands and resources to support their ever-increasing population. “Our wars in the past were for our national existence. And yet, you, America, are going to interfere with our life and death question. This is hardly fair.”<sup>363</sup> Similar bold statements along with Japanese actions in China caused Americans in Shanghai, including Powell, to do everything possible to enlighten Americans back home about the seriousness of the Asian crisis, and its importance to the U.S.<sup>364</sup>

Powell kept risking his life to fight against the Japanese. After surviving one assassination attempt on September 2, 1939, Powell told *The Chicago Tribune* that “I am still good for another war.”<sup>365</sup> When it appeared that Japanese placed a price on Powell’s head, rewarding anyone who killed him, *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch* said that Powell was not disturbed.<sup>366</sup> Powell’s office doors remained wide open, to both friends and possible gunmen. Powell told his worried friends who urged him to take precautions, “[T]hose rats won’t do anything to me.”<sup>367</sup> At the same time, Powell asked

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<sup>362</sup> Powell, “*My 25 Years in China, chapter31*,” F 122, JBPP.

<sup>363</sup> Ibid.

<sup>364</sup> Ibid.

<sup>365</sup> Powell, “*U.S. Correspondent Bombed at War Front*”, *The Associate Press*, September 2, 1939, F 184, JBPP.

<sup>366</sup> Gyan, “*Fighting Editor from Missouri Wars on Japan*”, *The St. Louis Post Dispatch*, December 10, 1939, F 184, JBPP, 1.

<sup>367</sup> Ibid.

Chinese postal workers to hide his newspapers from Japanese inspectors, and then distributed them.<sup>368</sup> Despite the Japanese censorship, Powell's publications reached their readers in the heart of Japanese-controlled territory, and his circulation soared, wrote the *Post-Dispatch*.<sup>369</sup>

Powell's personal courage of facing the Japanese suppression helped his publication remain independent and prosperous for some time when other foreign publications captivated and turned themselves into pro-Japanese organs. However, one person's fight could not stop the Japanese from shutting down the overall publishing industry in Shanghai, and could certainly not save China's declining situation. On the contrary, the more outspoken Powell was, the more likely he drew Japanese attacks and expedited his impending personal tragedy.

***1941: An Independent Journalist's Tragedy Exploded as the National Interests Clashed: Powell as a Victim of an Open Warfare between Japan and the U.S.***

By 1941, negotiations still went on in Washington until December 7. Any illusion that Washington held about Japanese prudence mostly disappeared after Hitler quickly seized France and the Netherlands in mid-1940, and stood poised to invade Great Britain.<sup>370</sup> In the Asian battlefields, the Japanese occupied Indochina, and invaded other European colonies in the South Pacific, thereby diverting British

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<sup>368</sup> Desmond, *Ties of War: World News Reporting 1940-45*, 184.

<sup>369</sup> Gyan, "Fighting Editor from Missouri Wars on Japan", *The St. Louis Post Dispatch*, 10 December 1939, F 184, JBPP, 1.

<sup>370</sup> Lafeber, *The Clash: A History of U.S.-Japan Relations*, 191.

attention and strength from the European battlefield. By July 1941, after congressional debates, Washington decided to freeze Japanese assets in the U.S., and embargo steel, oil, and other war materials for Japan.<sup>371</sup> Secretary Hull said that the time for “appeasement” of Japan had passed. The time for a “firm policy” had arrived.<sup>372</sup> Since the U.S. had been supplying 60 percent of Japan’s oil, this embargo would slow down Japan’s invasion process if the Japanese could not find a substitute source. Japanese military planners in Tokyo concluded that Roosevelt’s freeze meant the Japanese would be unable to wage war for more than two years unless the South Pacific resources were seized.<sup>373</sup> By summer of 1941, after the Hull-Nomura conversations<sup>374</sup> collapsed and Indochina crisis escalated, Americans and Japanese accelerated a rush down the road to open warfare.

Though Japan and the U.S. had not yet declared a war, their conflict impacted China. An open confrontation was also embodied in the battles for publishing rights between the independent American journalists and the Japanese military. By July 1941, the Japanese openly attacked American and other foreign journalists.<sup>375</sup> That summer,

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<sup>371</sup> Liu, “The Sino-Japanese War,” in *U.S.-China Relations: 1784-1992*, 147; Lafeber, *The Clash: A History of U.S.-Japan Relations*, 200.

<sup>372</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

<sup>373</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

<sup>374</sup> Note: In May-June 1941, the Secretary of State Cordell Hull and Japanese Ambassador Nomura Kichisaburo exchanged draft and ideas in Washington. During the conversations, Hull demanded that Japan leave China, swear off military conquest, and pledge itself unalterably to the open door. The Japanese would agree to only withdraw a selected part of troops, and asked the United States to lift the embargo on oil and scrap metal, and American mediation of China conflict and settlements on terms favorable to Japan. The conversation ended nowhere as the two sides asked for the thing the other side would not give up under any circumstances.

<sup>375</sup> Powell, “*My Fight for a Free Press in China*,” *Advertising’s War Task and Post-war Responsibility: Highlights of the War Advertising Conference* (presented at Advertising Federation of America, June 28-30, 1943), 1.

the Japanese asked seven Western journalists to leave China. Powell's name was at the top of the list.<sup>376</sup> Immediately after publishing the blacklist, the Municipal Police of the Shanghai International Settlement stationed guards at all newspaper offices. A plain-clothes Chinese detective was sent to sit in Powell's front office and accompanied him home in the evenings. Several days later, Powell barely survived an attempt to assassinate him with a hand grenade as he was walking home.<sup>377</sup> Later that July, three of those seven foreign journalists departed for the U.S., but Powell stayed. Later, he explained later in manuscripts that he remained in Shanghai for both "tangible and intangible factors."<sup>378</sup>

Among the tangible factors was my staff of loyal Chinese assistants in the front office and mechanical department who had stuck by me, some almost throughout the period of my residence in Shanghai...

Next among the tangibles was the fact that I was, in addition to my regular newspaper work, director of a secret radio station owned by Press Wireless, which had been operated under the nose of the Japanese censors who controlled all the other communication services including the cable companies and the American R.C.A and Mackay radio services. As the situation became more critical it became all the more vital that the last remaining uncensored radio service be kept in operation. We succeeded in accomplishing this seemingly impossible task up to 10 o'clock on the morning of December 7, 1941, and cleared all the messages telling of the occupation of Shanghai, before the Japs found our station and took it over.<sup>379</sup>

Meanwhile, the U.S. increased its assistance to China in a response to Japan's open offenses against the American community in China. President Roosevelt applied

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<sup>376</sup> Ting, *Government Control of the Press in Modern China: 1900-1949*, 131.

<sup>377</sup> Powell, "My 25 Years in China, chapter 31," F 123, JBPP.

<sup>378</sup> Ibid.

<sup>379</sup> Ibid.

economic sanctions against Japan, such as requiring export licenses for Japanese products, freezing all Japanese assets in the U.S. in the summer of 1941. In addition, American aviators on active duty were permitted to enter the U.S. Air Force Reserve and to join the Chinese armed forces, in what began the Flying Tigers. Roosevelt ordered more aircrafts for the Flying Tigers and for the U.S. bases in the Philippines, and set up a Far Eastern command under General Douglas MacArthur.<sup>380</sup> However, this aid was too late to save China or to prevent an open confrontation with Japan. On the contrary, a sudden increasing American assistance to China only drove Japan into a corner, and they made a more severe round of counterattacks.

On December 7, 1941, the same day as the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor at Hawaii, the Japanese troops entered the International Settlement of Shanghai, symbolizing Japan smashing all the other Western powers in Shanghai and becoming the sole power. They sealed all publications which were not pro-Japanese. Independent American journalists who chose to stay in Shanghai became a war casualty as the Japanese crashed all remaining foreign interests in China. Since the U.S. was not prepared for Japan's sudden bombing in Hawaii, it had no resources to protect the American community in Shanghai. Powell, as well as the other American citizens in Shanghai, had to rely on themselves for survival.

Powel either did not realize or was not discouraged by the fact that he was already in an isolated and helpless trap. The Japanese could easily seize his publications or even his life. Two or three days after the Pearl Harbor incident, the

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<sup>380</sup> Lafeber, *The Clash: A History of U.S.-Japan Relations*, 201; Liu, "The Sino-Japanese War," in *U.S.-China Relations: 1784-1992*, 147

Japanese called a meeting of Americans in Shanghai to obtain complimentary statements to use in their propaganda in Japan and abroad. During the meeting, when one Japanese army officer questioned why Powell was still in Shanghai, Powell recalled his retort, “I’m still a newspaper man and have decided to stay and see the end of the show. I don’t suppose you can do worse than shoot me!” He soon discovered that the Japanese could do worse.<sup>381</sup>

Within three weeks after the Pearl Harbor incident, the Japanese arrested and jailed practically every American and British journalist in Shanghai not on the Japanese payroll.<sup>382</sup> Powell included, recalled,

“Early in the morning of December 20, six or seven officers in civilian clothes came to my room at the Metropolis Hotel in Shanghai and informed me that they had instructions to search the room. They seized all papers, carbon copies of letters and other records which I had in my room. While my offices had been sealed previously and I was not permitted to visit them, I was informed that the gendarmes had repeatedly visited the building and removed various files and office records and even the electric clock on the wall.”<sup>383</sup>

When the Japanese completed the search, they brought Powell to the Bridge House detention camp. Powell was thrown into a cell with some other 40 people, including Americans, Britons, Russians, and Chinese.<sup>384</sup> Those prisoners charged with espionage for varying periods up to six months were held under conditions that Powell said the world had not experienced since medieval times.<sup>385</sup>

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<sup>381</sup> Powell, “*My 25 Years in China, chapters 34, 35,*” F 126, JBPP.

<sup>382</sup> Powell, “*Miscellaneous Manuscripts*” 1942-1947. F 181, JBPP.

<sup>383</sup> Powell, *My Twenty Five Years in China*, 370.

<sup>384</sup> *Ibid*, 370-372.

<sup>385</sup> Powell, “*My Fight for a Free Press in China,*” 1.

The Japanese charged Powell with having “dangerous thoughts.”<sup>386</sup> Among the examples that the Japanese inquisitors produced were those messages disrespectful to the Japanese Emperor. As an example were Powell’s articles reprinted by *The New York Herald Tribune*, *The Nation*, and *The Asia Magazine* that contained a reference to a plot of an army officer in Tokyo to overthrow the Emperor and establish a Fascist dictatorship. In another example Powell had reprinted a 1932 Chinese magazine article, which referred to the Emperor Pu Yi of Manchuria as a “puppet of a puppet” of Hirohito, the Son of Heaven, who in turn was the puppet of the Japanese Army General Staff. The Japanese employed a large number of police censors for the sole purpose of checking all newspapers, for “disrespectful” references to Hirohito or the royal family. Powell later described Japanese censorship: “Japs have long memories, and their intelligence files are very complete.”<sup>387</sup>

When the Japanese police arrested Powell, together with another American journalist and one British journalist, they charged them “espionage and disturbance of the public peace.”<sup>388</sup> The accusations also stated that those journalists had engaged in a secret information service. In a *London Cable Bureau Report*, the charges reported:

They carried out activities under the protection of official organizations of their respective countries and sent report back to their home governments, serving as important information in influencing the attitudes of their governments toward Japan. They carried out pro-Chungking and anti-Japanese propaganda. Their activities were instrumental in aggravating Japan’s international relations... they can be

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<sup>386</sup> Powell, *My Twenty Five Years in China*, 373.

<sup>387</sup> Powell, “*My 25 Years in China*, chapter 35,” F 127, JBPP.

<sup>388</sup> “*FCC London Cable Bureau Report, Tokyo in English at 4:00 a.m. to Europe*” 15 June 1942. F 2, JBPP.

held responsible for one of the factors that led to the outbreak of the war in the Pacific.<sup>389</sup>

Due to these military charges, the Japanese placed Powell in solitary confinement without heat, proper cover, food or care.<sup>390</sup> In the Bridge House, Powell recalled,

“There was always a fight for the blanket, two to six groups of prisoners shared one blanket. Some nights there were no blankets at all; the (medical) treatment was worse than the disease. When my hangnail on one of the fingers became infected, after two weeks of pleading for treatment ... without using any anesthetic, the Japanese military doctor trimmed all the skin off my finger with a pair of scissors.”<sup>391</sup>

In the daytime, “We had nothing to do but sit—or kneel facing Tokyo — or think about our woes or talk in low voices when we knew the guard was out of earshot ... we were not allowed anything to read.”<sup>392</sup>

By February 26, 1942, the Japanese transferred Powell to a new prison at Kiangwan outside Shanghai. After squatting shoeless on a cold hardwood floor for months, Powell lost one foot and much of the other due to frostbite and gangrene.<sup>393</sup> One month later, the Japanese finally drove Powell to the Shanghai General Hospital. Shortly before mid-June 1942, Powell was rescued through an exchange program for Japanese prisoners held by the U.S.<sup>394</sup> Finally in June 1942, Powell left China where he worked for 25 years.

Upon his return to the U.S., Powell denounced the Japanese in print and

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<sup>389</sup> Ibid.

<sup>390</sup> Forrest C. Donnell and James P. Kem, “*Tribute to the Late John B. Powell*,” *Congressional Record*, March 10, 1947, 1.

<sup>391</sup> Powell, “*I Was a Prisoner of the Japs*,” *Reader’s Digest*, November 1942, F 23, JBPP, 8-13.

<sup>392</sup> Ibid.

<sup>393</sup> Donnell and Kem, “*Tribute to the Late John B. Powell*,” 1.

<sup>394</sup> “*Gordell Hull to Clinton P. Anderson*,” F 2, JBPP, June 8, 1942.

through personal appearances.<sup>395</sup> To the American audiences, Powell said, “What has happened to me, horrible as it was, is of no importance, except as it may serve to bring home to the American people what kind of treatment to expect, unless we work and fight with all our might for Victory.”<sup>396</sup> During the rest of the war, Powell spent most of his time on giving public speeches, lectures and writing news articles about China’s politics and Japan’s future. He continuously called for American’s aid with war materials supplies to the Chinese to drive the Japanese out.<sup>397</sup> “Recent developments in China have indicated that China can no longer withstand Japan’s assaults unless further help is forthcoming from the outside,” ... “The U.S. cannot escape the responsibility for China, [and] hence it will be up to us after the war to put the country on its feet.”<sup>398</sup> Consequently, his imprisonment became a widely known symbol of Japanese brutality.<sup>399</sup>

John B. Powell never fully recovered enough to return to Shanghai after the war ended in 1945. He testified at the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal in 1946, then fell ill and returned to the U.S. for further treatment. In spite of his failing health, he campaigned vigorously for a strong American presence in the Pacific and supported the Nationalist cause against the Chinese Communists.<sup>400</sup> On February 28, 1947,

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<sup>395</sup> Preface to F 1, JBPP.

<sup>396</sup> Powell, “*Services for Victory*” 1942-1945. F 1, JBPP.

<sup>397</sup> Powell to Miss K.Halle, February 11, 1943. F 4, JBPP.

<sup>398</sup> Powell, n.a. *The St Louis Post Dispatch*, May 4, 1944. F 22, JBPP.

<sup>399</sup> *Ibid.*, Preface to JBPP. F 1, JBPP.

<sup>400</sup> O’Brien. *An American Editor in Early Revolutionary China: John William Powell and the China Weekly / Monthly Review*, 3.

Powell died in Chevy Chase, Maryland. His death certificate showed he died of “arteriosclerosis, generalized, mild with coronary focalization, severe, chronic; and chopart’s amputation.”<sup>401</sup>

Powell’s tragedy resulted from his conflicts with the Japanese military. On the micro level, Powell’s journalistic values motivated him to challenge Japanese attempts to suppress wartime information. He ignored Japanese regular press controls, of censorship, blackmails, and bribery. In the end, the Japanese violently crackdown Powell’s journals and imprisoned him in 1941, when the Japanese overran Shanghai.

On the macro level, Powell’s journalistic conflicts with the Japanese military mirrored the U.S.-Japan national conflicts during the Sino-Japanese War. Japan’s pursuits of more administrative rights and territories in Asia imposed military threats, and eventually leading to a protracted political crisis between the U.S. and Japan in Asia-Pacific areas. Powell, as an American and a representative of American commercial interests in China, perceived that the Japanese invasion in China would affect American interests in Asia in the long term. Powell’s determination to defend American interests clashed with Japanese ambition to swallow China. In the end, the Japanese attempted to destroy any power that blocked its expansion in the Asia-Pacific area, including the U.S. and foreign journalists such as John Powell. When the U.S. failed to stop the Japanese aggression by appeasement, the Americans eventually defend their own national interests against the Japanese. The macro level national conflict resulted in a micro level personal nightmare for Powell.

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<sup>401</sup> “*Certificate of Death of Powell,*” F 195, JBPP.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **MILITARY CONTROLS INDEPENDENT PRESS AND JOURNALISTS OF NEUTRAL STATES**

A conflict between the military and journalism in wartime has long existed. Information becomes another weapon in war. Liberal journalists insisted on defending freedom of speech, whereas the military wanted to screen information to protect a nation in crisis. In fact, outspoken journalists and publications often become the casualty of war in the name of protecting national securities. This thesis looked at the conflict of military and press beyond those countries that immediately engaged in a war. This thesis examines the Japanese military controls over an American journalist in China during the Sino-Japanese War.

The aim is to understand the military conflicts with the independent foreign journalists of neutral states by employing a case study of the Japanese military controls over one American independent journalist. John B. Powell and his English-language weekly journal the *Review* existed in Shanghai during the second Sino-Japanese War, from August 13, 1937 to December 7, 1941, when the U.S. remained officially neutral to the crisis. Primarily this study asked: Why did the Japanese invading military attempt to control one independent American journalist in

Shanghai? And how did the Japanese military respond to Powell and other foreign journalists in China during that period? The findings of this case further compared and contrasted the overall patterns of military and press relations in wartime.

***The Japanese Invading Military Controls John B. Powell and His Journal the Review***

The natural conflict between dictatorial militarism and liberal journalism related the Japanese military's actions, and the independent American journalists' efforts in Shanghai. As Knightley's concluded in *The First Casualty* that correspondents during war seek to disclose as much as information possible as soon as possible, whereas the military seeks to tell as little as possible as late as possible.<sup>402</sup> The Japanese wished to unify the voices of the press of all nationalities to form a pro-Japan public opinion for a worldwide audience, to eventually assist the Japanese success in a war against China. The Japanese wanted to use the press to portray a favorable Japanese image to keep the world in the dark about the seriousness of Asian crisis and to hide military actions and strategies. Therefore, when John B. Powell refused to cooperate, the Japanese sealed his journal and imprisoned him. Powell's subsequent personal tragedy reflects that the concept of military controls over the press is not only limited to the warring countries, but exists universally among any conflicting parties.

Powell's conflict with the Japanese military was symptomatic the clashing

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<sup>402</sup> Phillip Knightley, *The First Casualty, From the Crimea to Vietnam: The War Correspondents as Hero, Propagandist, and Myth Maker* (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), 276.

national interests between the U.S. and Japan in Asia-Pacific area. Prior to December 7, 1941, the core U.S.-Japanese conflict focused on the economic interests. Although American trade with China and Japan in the 1930s counted little in its overall international business, the U.S. cared more about the rights to trade in the long term. Since the late nineteenth century, the U.S. advocated an Open Door Policy, a guarantee that all colonial powers in China enjoy an equal business opportunity. The balance was well maintained for decades until Japan intended to dominate North China. The Japanese demand of more privileges grew along with its increasing military power, a threat to other nations' interests in China. The U.S. saw that the Japanese encroachment on Western powers in China would be replicated in American's other overseas markets, and this would result in a great financial loss for the Americans in the long term. As a former Washington representative of American commercial interests in China (1920-22), Powell continued writing about the American economic interests in China during the second Sino-Japanese War. As Chapter Three and Four revealed, Powell published many editorials on the *Review* regarding this issue. He not only announced that the Japanese aggression would cause Americans great financial loss, but he also called for Washington to protect the American community in Asia. Powell's witness and other critics provided first-hand information to American audience and politicians at home. Even though Powell defined what he did as "following strictly accepted journalism standards", the Japanese regarded him and other independent foreign journalists in China as spies who disclosed Japanese military secrets and denounced their actions. The conflict

between the Japanese military goals of controlling and centralizing information and Powell's desire to tell the truth as he saw it was in fact a competition of the Japanese and American national interests.

The second primary national conflict between the U.S. and Japan was defending national security. Japanese invasion in China endangered all American properties and nationals that resided there. The Japanese would not allow any power to contradict their creation of a new order in China. The second threat on American national security came from the Japanese increasing military presence in Southern Asia surrounding China. As Axis countries invaded France and the rest of Europe in the early period of World War II, the U.S. abandoned its appeasement policy and adopted a stronger stand toward Japan. Therefore, when an expanding Japanese military met a resisting American policy, Japan considered the U.S. a future enemy. Japan and the U.S. were doomed to clash in the Asia-Pacific area.

Powell's editorials on the *Review* foresaw Japanese potential threats to the U.S. He advocated that Washington take a firmer stance toward the Sino-Japanese crisis before Japanese actions forced them to do so. After the Japanese confiscated foreign publications in Shanghai and began to expel foreign journalists, Powell chose to stay and criticized the Japanese actions openly until the Japanese military sealed his paper among other offending publications in Shanghai on December 7, 1941. Compared with his peers, Powell's foresight and courageous reports on Japanese assault were too outspoken and too advanced, which ultimately brought him under Japanese military prosecution.

### *The Japanese Military Control Powell and the Other Foreign Journalists in China*

The Japanese strategy for defeating the wartime press was to divide the publications into several groups, to encircle them, and then destroy them one after another. For example, at first, the Japanese censored Chinese newspapers published in the Chinese-governed area of Shanghai, but left the press in the foreign settlement untouched. After the Japanese took over the Chinese-governed area, they further advanced into the International Settlement and the French concession in Shanghai. Even though all properties registered under the foreign councils and enjoyed extra-territoriality, these “cities within a city” did not continue to protect the foreign-owned publications during the crisis of war. The Japanese first crushed the foreign-owned Chinese-language newspapers in the settlement, and then they went after the English-language newspapers. Once they smashed the Chinese press, and the foreign press became vulnerable to the Japanese attack. Such publications were doomed as the U.S.-Japanese conflict escalated into an all-out war.

Initially, the Japanese military controls over the foreign press in China, such as in John B. Powell’s case, were through censorship, terrorism, and propaganda methods. The Japanese issued laws and regulations through the Shanghai Municipal Council and the puppet Nanking government. Their “advice” specified what the press could print and how it should be printed. Those publications that did not follow the rules would then receive death threats, penalties or even closure. The Japanese police applied pre-publication censorship by screening news stories, deleting offending items,

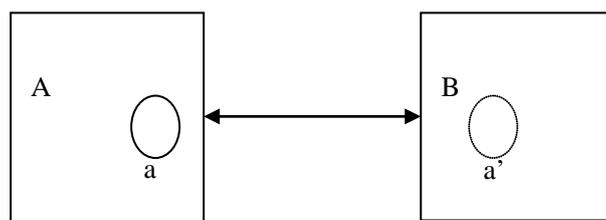
or revising them to a more pro-Japanese tone. Furthermore, the Japanese military deprived foreign journalists of their publishing facilities by bombing their printing machines and transportation vehicles. When these interferences failed, the Japanese military then sealed and destroyed the publication offices.

Moreover, under the heavy hands of the Japanese military, John B. Powell and other foreign journalists physically and emotionally suffered. The Japanese tried bribing dissenting journalists with money, official positions, and special privileges. Next, they interfered with the foreign journalists' access to news sources, and restricted their movements for reporting from the battlefields. Later on, as the Japanese fully occupied the entire territory of Shanghai, they published a blacklist that included 87 Chinese and foreign journalists who were to be expelled. The Japanese also warned those foreign journalists sympathetic to China by presenting examples of the persecutions and bloody punishments of the Chinese journalists. If such intimidations failed, the Japanese then kidnapped, assassinated, arrested, and imprisoned the foreign journalists. Eventually, all the Japanese controls paved the way for propaganda. They organized official news briefings to influence the foreign publications in Shanghai. They set up pro-Japanese publications and distribution systems in an attempt to drive out the dissenting foreign publications. They also established some journalism programs to train new news staffs. Gradually, these massive efforts squeezed out some foreign publications.

### **The Meaning of the Study**

This paper adds a third pattern to the study of military and press conflict in wartime. Previous studies focusing on military and press conflicts between the primary warring countries have two patterns of control: Nation A military controls nation A's journalists in either the overseas or domestic battlefields. Here, the Japanese military controlled Japanese correspondents in China or Japan. Or, nation A's military controls nation B journalists in either the overseas or domestic battlefields. Here, the Japanese controlled Chinese journalists in China or Japan during the Sino-Japanese War. The Japanese military controls of John B. Powell signified another possible pattern: Nation A's military suppresses nation C's journalists when nation A is fighting against nation B. In Shanghai, the Japanese military suppressed the American independent journalists who were in China during the Sino-Japanese War. The findings of the research universalized the military tension with wartime press of all nationalities as long as the press does not line up with the military dictates.

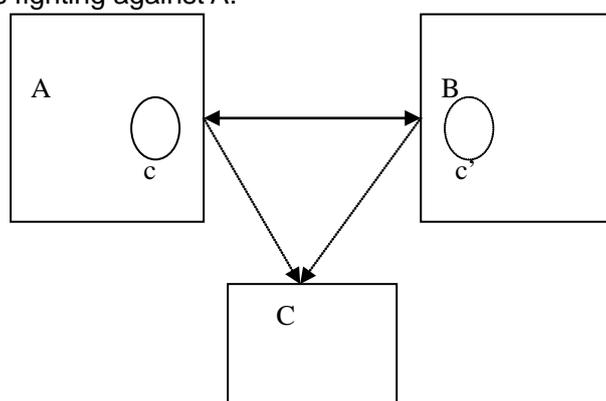
Patterns 1 & 2



Nation A's military controls nation A's media (a) in either nation A or B when A is fighting against B.

Nation B's military controls nation A's media (a) in either nation A or B when B is fighting against A.

is fighting against A.



Pattern 3:

Nation A's military controls a neutral nation C's media when A is fighting against B.

A second contribution of this study is a depiction of historically overlooked experiences of American journalists in China during the early period of the second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945). American journalists in 1930s in China were divided into several categories: overseas correspondents sent by well-known American newspapers such as those of *The New York Times* and *The Chicago Tribune*; freelance reporters who contributed to the foreign press regardless of nationalities, such as Edgar Snow who went to China as a student, and later corresponded for American and British newspapers;<sup>403</sup> and then American entrepreneurs who set up journalistic businesses in China, and served primarily the foreigners in China and Chinese readers who read English. American scholarly works have already spotlighted the first category of journalists. In contrast, the second and third categories of American journalists in China appear less often in academia. Thus, a study of John B. Powell, who fits into the latter two categories, enhances the overall understanding of American journalists' struggles against an occupying power, in this case, the Japanese military during a sensitive period of the Sino-American-Japanese relations.

Journalists of neutral states often provide the most credible reporting of a war, because their visions are not bound by patriotism or partisan interests. The consistent reporting of independent American journalists helped readers and scholars comprehend the Sino-Japanese crisis. In the early period of the war, independent American journalists in Shanghai spared no expense in informing both Chinese and

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<sup>403</sup> Bibliography, Edgar Park Snow (1905-1972) Papers, University Archives, University of Missouri-Kansas City. Retrieved online [http://www.umke.edu/University\\_Archives/INVTRY/EPS/EPS-INTRO.HTM](http://www.umke.edu/University_Archives/INVTRY/EPS/EPS-INTRO.HTM)

foreign readers about the events in China. After the Japanese censored the Chinese publications, the American-owned press became valuable information hubs for Chinese intellectuals who were eager for updates on the war.

In addition, independent American journalists and their publications assisted the Chinese in their fight against the Japanese invasion, although that was not the Americans' initial intention. As the Japanese expanded in China and persecuted Chinese citizens, foreign publications' reports on Japanese military actions was increasingly anti-Japanese. The more the Japanese military interfered with the foreign publications, the more resistance liberal American journalists showed.

According to Kovach and Rosenstiel, journalism should provide information, create public forum, and engage the community.<sup>404</sup> Journalists wishing to continue to fulfill such functions in wartimes have to overcome exceptional obstacles posed by social disruptions, military suppression, and government censorship. In the midst of war, Journalists tried to follow their journalistic principles, which otherwise would be easily corrupted by propaganda, bribes, and subsidies.

The overseas wartime reporting of those independent American journalists need more academic understanding and recognition. In the past decade, the same pattern is being repeated in contemporary wars, such as the British freelance reporters became victimized in the U.S.-Iraq conflict during the Second Gulf War in Iraq and the Afghanistan War. Thus, the ABC pattern may serve as another context to understand why and how the military controls journalists of neutral countries during a

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<sup>404</sup> Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel, "What is Journalism for" in *The Element of Journalism* (New York, Toronto, London, Sydney, Auckland: Random House Inc, 2001), 15-33.

war.

*Similarities and Differences of the ABC pattern with Other Military Controls over the Press*

The ultimate purpose of wartime military control of the press is to use information to win the war. The same motive applies to this case study. A military and press conflict resulted from the natural disagreement between the liberal journalism and authoritarian military forces. Moreover, the military and journalists have different definitions of defending national interests and securities, especially when military and journalists respectively belong to the warring parties. Though John Powell claimed to be an independent publisher in China, he stood up for the American interests. His writing more and more opposed the Japanese expansion in China, which also endangered American national securities and interests in Asia. From 1937 to 1941, the Japanese attempted controls on John B. Powell and the *Review* in Shanghai strengthened as the conflict between Japan and the U.S. intensified. In order to win the war, the Japanese made every possible effort to paralyze the press. The military control and journalistic resistance were in fact a behind-the-scene competition between Japan and the U.S. for public support, which ultimately would serve their national interests.

The Japanese military adopted similar methods to control the foreign journalists in Shanghai as is found with the overall patterns of military suppression of the press. The military interfered with news production, delivery, and reception. For example, in order to restrict news production, the Japanese bombed, assassinated, and

blackmailed foreign journalists; and they censored telegraphs that were sent between newswire services and the local foreign newsroom; Furthermore, they imposed regulations on what content could be published and in what way. To block the information delivery, the Japanese issued postal censorship to screen all messages except for pro-Japanese ones. To interfere with readers' reception of certain information, the Japanese detained some newspapers sent through the mail, so that the readers had to switch to pro-Japanese ones. Once the Japanese confiscated those non pro-Japanese publications, they swarmed around the readers with all sorts of other information as propaganda. In short, the Japanese used every method available against the independent foreign journalists in the Sino-Japanese War: censorship, legal regulation, access restriction, terrorism, and propaganda. These methods are similar historically to what other militaries did against the press.

The way in which the Japanese executed their controls of the American journalists in China distinguished itself from other cases. Since the Japanese had invaded China and were not a legal authority, at first they carried out those methods indirectly and secretly. Before the Japanese took over the entire city of Shanghai, they imposed regulations and censorship through the Shanghai Municipal Council and Chinese puppet government. Only after Japan took more of an administrative role from the Chinese and Western powers, the Japanese tighten their controls more independently and openly. The pattern that nation A's military controls neutral nation C's journalists when nation A fights against nation B could happen only under a weak regime of nation B. As in Powell's case, China, a semi-colony occupied by the British,

Germany, Japan, French, and American in the 1930s, faced multiple threats: it had dealt with several foreign superpowers that continuously demanded privileges and territories; it was fighting a war against Japan, and it was struggling with a civil war between the Chinese Nationalists and the Communists. China was so busy fighting to be free from those threats that it could barely protect the foreign journalists and their publications. Moreover, the International Settlement, the center stage of this case, was out of China's control: more like a city inside another city, it was not the Chinese, but an international free zone. The Municipal Council, made of the British, Americans, and Japanese, governed the settlement.<sup>405</sup> Foreigners designed and built their own public facilities, education systems, churches, entertainment venues, special postal services, and published their own newspapers.<sup>406</sup> After the Japanese occupied the territory, all these facilities, including the press, had to submit themselves to the Japanese.

## **Future Study**

Most independent American journalists in China during the 1930s and 1940s were trapped in the complex relations of Japan, China and the U.S. The Japanese perceived them as stumbling blocks, the Chinese China considered them as spies from a capitalism country, whereas the U.S. categorized these journalists as pro-China.

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<sup>405</sup> Tong, *China and World Press*, 23.

<sup>406</sup> Marie-Claire Bergere, "The Other China': Shanghai from 1919 to 1949" in *Shanghai: Revolution and Development in an Asian Metropolis*. Christopher Howe, eds. (Cambridge, London, New York, New Rochelle, Melbourne, Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 7.

They were isolated, misunderstood, and persecuted for what they believed were the journalists' rights to know, to write, and to publish.<sup>407</sup> This research has only detailed the encounters of the independent American journalists in China with the Japanese military. But in fact, the American overseas correspondents in China faced many other aspects of hardships during that period, such as the Chinese Nationalist censorship of American journalists in Chongqing.<sup>408</sup> However, Shanghai International Settlement, the center stage of this case study was the Japanese domain after the Chinese troops withdrew from the city of Shanghai in late 1937. The Chinese censorship, which spread out in other cities, such as in Chongqing, after 1939, did not become prevalent in Shanghai. Therefore, Powell's case exemplified only one angle of multiple conflicts between military and independent American journalists in China.

This research has primarily used the *Review's* accounts from August 1937 to December 1941 to chronicle the Japanese military controls of the press in Shanghai. Many analyses were based on Powell's editorials, and contributed articles on Sino-Japanese and U.S.-Japanese relations that were published by the *Review*. Although other primary sources, such as Powell's manuscripts and Japanese military documents, were used to compare and contrast with what Powell said on the journal, more diversified primary sources would make the study more reliable. Further research could also balance Powell's example with the stories of other foreign

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<sup>407</sup> Note: for instance, Powell's son William Powell, the editor in chief and publisher for the *Review* in the 1940s, was later charged with treason after he returned to the U.S. during the Cold War era in the 1950s and could not enter the journalism industry thereafter.

<sup>408</sup> Knightley, *The First Casualty, From the Crimea to Vietnam: The War Correspondents as Hero, Propagandist, and Myth Maker*, 276-278.

journalists in China.

The military controls of independent press and journalists of the neutral states symbolize the highest level of information control during wartime. Unlike press and journalists of warring countries, independent journalists of neutral states should have had more freedom to report truth and inform the public of what is happening. They embody an ideal journalistic commitment of delivering news in any condition, even in a war that they do not belong to. However, the military suppresses not only the press of warring countries, but also those of any other who contradicts the military efforts of winning the war. In this sense, all press in the battlefield, no matter whether it is directly involved in the war or not, can not sustain neutrality, because whoever has a different agenda from the military will turn itself into an opposition position. A study on military controls of independent press and journalists of the neutral states will extend the examinations of the journalistic morality and professionalism, and the controls of the most desperate military in wartime.

## APPENDIX

### **Map 1: Japanese occupation map of China:**

Please refer to the following link:

<http://www.dean.usma.edu/history/web03/atlases/chinese%20civil%20war/chinese%20civil%20war%20pages/chinese%20civil%20war%20map%2005.htm>

The map was created by the U.S. Military Academy (West Point) and is from the "West Point Atlas of Major Conflicts"

<http://www.dean.usma.edu/history/web03/atlases/AtlasesTableOfContents.html>

### **Map 2: China's political map**

Please refer to the following link

[http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle\\_east\\_and\\_asia/china\\_pol01.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/china_pol01.jpg)

The map is from 2001 produced by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, and is linked from the Perry Castaneda Library at the Univ. of Texas at Austin

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